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'I SAY NO.'

Or, the Robe-Letter Answered.

BY WILKIE COLLINS.*

BOOK THE SECOND.

In London.

CHAPTER XII.

MRS. ELLMOTHER.

THE metropolis of Great Britain is, in certain respects, like no other metropolis on the face of the earth. In the population that throngs the streets, the extremes of Wealth and the extremes of Poverty meet, as they meet nowhere else. In the streets themselves, the glory and the shame of architecture—the mansion and the hovel—are neighbours in situation, as they are neighbours nowhere else. London, in its social aspect, is the city of contrasts.

Towards the close of evening, Emily left the railway terminus for the place of residence in which loss of fortune had compelled her aunt to take refuge. As she approached her destination, the cab passed—by merely crossing a road—from a spacious and beautiful Park, with its surrounding houses topped by statues and cupolas, to a row of cottages, hard by a stinking ditch miscalled a canal. The city of contrasts: north and south,

east and west, the city of social contrasts.

Emily stopped the cab before the garden gate of a cottage, at the further end of the row. The bell was answered by the one servant now in her aunt's employment—Miss Letitia's maid.

Personally, this good creature was one of the ill-fated women, whose appearance suggests that Nature intended to make men of them, and altered her mind at the last moment. Miss Letitia's maid was tall and gaunt and awkward. The first impression produced by her face was an impression of bones. They rose high on her forehead; they projected on her cheeks; and they reached their boldest development in her jaws. In the cavernous eyes of this unfortunate person rigid obstinacy and rigid goodness looked out together, with equal severity, on all her fellow-creatures alike. Her mistress (whom she had served for a quarter of a century and more) called her 'Bony.' She accepted this cruelly appropriate nick-name

* *The Right of Translation is Reserved.*

as a mark of affectionate familiarity which honoured a servant. No other person was allowed to take liberties with her: to every one but her mistress she was known as Mrs. Ellmother.

'How is my aunt?' Emily asked.

'Bad.'

'Why have I not heard of her illness before?'

'Because she's too fond of you to let you be distressed about her. "Don't tell Emily;" those were her orders, as long as she kept her senses.'

'Kept her senses! Good heavens! what do you mean?'

'Fever—that's what I mean.'

'I must see her directly; I am not afraid of infection.'

'There's no infection to be afraid of. But you mustn't see her, for all that.'

'I insist on seeing her.'

'Miss Emily, I am disappointing you for your own good. Don't you know me well enough to trust me, by this time?'

'I do trust you.'

'Then leave my mistress to me—and go and make yourself comfortable in your own room.'

Emily's answer was a positive refusal. Mrs. Ellmother, driven to her last resources, raised a new obstacle.

'It's not to be done, I tell you! How can you see Miss Letitia, when she can't bear the light in her room? Do you know what colour her eyes are? Red, poor soul—red as a boiled lobster.'

With every word the woman uttered, Emily's perplexity and distress increased. 'You told me my aunt's illness was fever,' she said—'and now you speak of some complaint in her eyes. Stand out of the way, if you please, and let me go to her.'

Mrs. Ellmother, impenetrably superintending the removal of the luggage and the dismissal of the cab,

looked out at the door. 'Here's the doctor,' she announced. 'It seems I can't satisfy you; ask him what's the matter. Come in, doctor.' She threw open the door of the parlour, and introduced Emily. 'This is the mistress's niece, sir. Please try if you can keep her quiet. I can't.' She placed chairs with the hospitable politeness of a servant of the old school—and returned to her post at Miss Letitia's bedside.

Doctor Allday was an elderly man, with a cool manner and a ruddy complexion—thoroughly acclimatised to the atmosphere of pain and grief in which it was his destiny to live. He spoke to Emily (without any undue familiarity) as if he had been accustomed to see her for the greater part of her life.

'That's a curious woman,' he said, when Mrs. Ellmother closed the door; 'the most headstrong person, I think, I ever met with. But devoted to her mistress, and, making allowance for her awkwardness, not a bad nurse. I am afraid I can't give you an encouraging report of your aunt. The rheumatic fever (aggravated by the situation of this house—built on clay, you know, and close to stagnant water) has been latterly complicated by delirium.'

'Is that a bad sign, sir?'

'The worst possible sign; it shows that the disease has affected the heart. Yes: she is suffering from inflammation of the eyes, but that is an unimportant symptom. We can keep the pain under by means of cooling lotions and a dark room. I've often heard her speak of you—especially since the illness assumed a serious character. What did you say? Will she know you, when you go into her room? This is about the time when the delirium usually sets in. I'll see if there's a quiet interval.'

He opened the door—and came back again.

'By-the-way,' he resumed, 'I ought perhaps to explain how it was that I took the liberty of sending you that telegram. Mrs. Ellmother refused to inform you of her mistress's serious illness. That circumstance, according to my view of it, laid the responsibility on the doctor's shoulders. The form taken by your aunt's delirium—I mean the apparent tendency of the words that escape her in that state—seems to excite some incomprehensible feeling in the mind of her crabbed servant. She wouldn't even let me go into the bedroom, if she could possibly help it. Did Mrs. Ellmother give you a warm welcome when you came here?'

'Far from it. My arrival seemed to annoy her.'

'Ah—just what I expected. These faithful old servants always end by presuming on their fidelity. Did you ever hear what a witty poet—I forget his name: he lived to be ninety—said of the man who had been his valet for more than half a century? "For thirty years he was the best of servants; and for thirty years he has been the hardest of masters." Quite true—I might say the same of my housekeeper. Rather a good story, isn't it?'

The story was completely thrown away on Emily; but one subject interested her now. 'My poor aunt has always been fond of me,' she said. 'Perhaps she might know me, when she recognises nobody else.'

'Not very likely,' the doctor answered. 'But there's no laying down any rule, in cases of this kind. I have sometimes observed that circumstances which have produced a strong impression on patients, when they are in a state of health, give a certain direction to the wandering of their minds, when

they are in a state of fever. You will say, "I am not a circumstance; I don't see how this encourages me to hope"—and you will be quite right. Instead of talking of my medical experience, I shall do better to look at Miss Letitia, and let you know the result. You have got other relations, I suppose? No? Very distressing—very distressing.'

Who has not suffered as Emily suffered, when she was left alone? Are there not moments—if we dare to confess the truth—when poor humanity loses its hold on the consolations of religion and the hope of immortality, and feels the cruelty of creation that bids us live, on the condition that we die, and leads the first warm beginnings of love, with merciless certainty, to the cold conclusion of the grave?

'She's quiet, for the time being,' Doctor Allday announced, on his return. 'Remember, please, that she can't see you in the inflamed state of her eyes, and don't disturb the bed-curtains. The sooner you go to her the better perhaps—if you have anything to say which depends on her recognising your voice. I'll call to-morrow morning. Very distressing,' he repeated, taking his hat and making his bow—'very distressing.'

Emily crossed the narrow little passage which separated the two rooms, and opened the bedchamber door. Mrs. Ellmother met her on the threshold. 'No,' said the obstinate old servant, 'you can't come in.'

The faint voice of Miss Letitia made itself heard, calling Mrs. Ellmother by her familiar nickname.

'Bony! who is it?'

'Never mind.'

'Who is it?'

'Miss Emily—if you must know.'

'O! poor dear, why does she come here? Who told her I was ill?'

'The doctor told her.'

'Don't come in, Emily. It will only distress you—and it will do me no good. God bless you, my love. Don't come in.'

'There!' said Mrs. Ellmother. 'Do you hear that? Go back to the sitting-room.'

Thus far, the hard necessity of controlling herself had kept Emily silent. She was now able to speak without tears. 'Remember the old times, aunt,' she pleaded gently. 'Don't keep me out of your room, when I have come here to nurse you!'

'I'm her nurse. Go back to the sitting-room,' Mrs. Ellmother repeated.

True love lasts while life lasts. The dying woman relented.

'Bony! Bony! I can't be unkind to Emily. Let her in.'

Mrs. Ellmother still insisted on having her way. 'You're contradicting your own orders,' she said to her mistress. 'You don't know how soon you may begin wandering in your mind again. Think, Miss Letitia—think.'

This remonstrance produced no impression: it was received in silence. Mrs. Ellmother's great gaunt figure still blocked up the doorway.

'If you force me to it,' Emily said quietly, 'I must go to the doctor, and ask him to interfere.'

'Do you mean that?' Mrs. Ellmother said quietly, on her side.

'I do mean it,' was the answer.

The old servant suddenly submitted—with a look which took Emily by surprise. She had expected to see anger: the face that now confronted her was a face subdued by sorrow and fear.

'I wash my hands of it,' Mrs. Ellmother said. 'Go in—and take the consequences.'

CHAPTER XIII.

MISS LETITIA.

EMILY entered the room. The door was immediately closed on her from the outer side. Mrs. Ellmother's heavy steps were heard, retreating along the passage. Then, the banging of the door that led into the kitchen shook the flimsily-built cottage. Then, there was silence.

The dim light of a lamp, hidden away in a corner, and screened by a dingy green shade, just revealed the closely-curtained bed, and the table near it bearing medicine-bottles and glasses. The only objects on the chimney-piece were a clock that had been stopped in mercy to the sufferer's irritable nerves, and an open case containing a machine for pouring drops into the eyes. The smell of fumigating pastilles hung heavily on the air. To Emily's excited imagination, the silence was like the silence of death. She approached the bed trembling. 'Won't you speak to me, aunt?'

'Is that you, Emily? Who let you come in?'

'You said I might come in, dear. Are you thirsty? I see some lemonade on the table. Shall I give it to you?'

'No! If you open the bed-curtains, you let in the light. My poor eyes! Why are you here, my dear? Why are you not at the school?'

'It's holiday-time, aunt. Besides, I have left school for good.'

'Left school? My niece has left school?' Miss Letitia's memory made an effort, as she repeated those words. 'Yes, yes; you asked to go to school, when your father died. You always had a governess in your father's time. Did you dislike the governess?'

'No, dear. I only asked to

go to school, because I hoped the change would help me to bear our dreadful loss. It did help me. I made a kind friend at school—Cecilia Wyvil. Don't you remember Cecilia?

She did remember. The name made its faint impression on her mind.

'You were going somewhere when you left school,' she said; 'and Cecilia had something to do with it. O, my love, how cruel of you to go away to a stranger, when you might live here with me!' She paused—her sense of what she had herself just said began to grow confused. 'What stranger?' she asked abruptly. 'Was it a man? What name? The name's gone—lost. O, my mind! Has death got hold of my mind, before my body?'

'Hush! hush! I'll tell you the name, aunt. Sir Jervis Redwood.'

'I don't know him. I don't want to know him. Do you think he means to send for you? Perhaps, he *has* sent for you. I won't allow it! You sha'n't go!'

'Don't excite yourself, dear! I have refused to go; I mean to stay here with you.'

The fevered brain held to its last idea. '*Has* he sent for you?' she said again, louder than before.

Emily replied once more, in terms carefully chosen with the one purpose of pacifying her. The attempt proved to be useless, and worse—it seemed to make her suspicious. 'I won't be deceived!' she said; 'I mean to know all about it. He did send for you. Whom did he send?'

'His housekeeper.'

'What name?' The tone in which she put the question told of excitement that was rising to its climax. 'Don't you know that I'm curious about names?' she burst out. 'Why do you provoke me? Who is it?'

'Nobody you know, or need care about, dear aunt. Mrs. Rook.'

Instantly on the utterance of that name, there followed an unexpected result. Silence ensued.

Emily waited—hesitated—advanced, to part the curtains, and look in at her aunt. She was stopped by a dreadful sound of laughter—the cheerless laughter that is heard among the mad. It suddenly ended in a dreary sigh.

Afraid to look in, she spoke, hardly knowing what she said. 'Is there anything you wish for? Shall I call—?'

Miss Letitia's voice interrupted her. Dull, low, rapidly muttering, it was unlike, shockingly unlike, the familiar voice of her aunt. It said strange words.

'Mrs. Rook! What does Mrs. Rook matter? Or her husband either? Bony, Bony, you're frightened about nothing. Where's the danger of those two people turning up? Do you know how many miles away the village is? O, you fool—a hundred miles and more. Never mind the coroner: the coroner must keep in his own district—and the jury too. A risky deception? I call it a pious fraud. And I have a tender conscience, and a cultivated mind. The newspapers! What do I care, if she does see the newspapers! She mightn't read it—and, if she did read it, she wouldn't have a suspicion of the truth. You poor old Bony! Upon my word, you do me good—you make me laugh.'

The cheerless laughter broke out again—and died away again drearily in a sigh.

Accustomed to decide rapidly, in the ordinary emergencies of her life, Emily felt herself painfully embarrassed by the position in which she was now placed.

After what she had already heard, could she reconcile it to

her sense of duty to her aunt to remain any longer in the room?

In the helpless self-betrayal of delirium, Miss Letitia had revealed some act of concealment, committed in her past life, and confided to her faithful old servant. Under these circumstances, had Emily made any discoveries which convicted her of taking a base advantage of her position at the bedside? Most assuredly not! The nature of the act of concealment; the causes that had led to it; the person (or persons) affected by it—these were mysteries which left her entirely in the dark. She had found out that her aunt was acquainted with Mrs. Rook, and that was literally all she knew.

Blameless, so far, in the line of conduct that she had pursued, might she still remain in the bed-chamber—on this distinct understanding with herself: that she would instantly return to the sitting-room if she heard anything which could suggest a doubt of Miss Letitia's claim to her affection and respect? After some hesitation as to the means of arriving at the right answer to this question, she consulted her conscience. Does conscience ever say, No—when inclination says, Yes? Emily's conscience sided with her reluctance to leave her aunt.

Throughout the time occupied by these reflections, the silence had remained unbroken. Emily began to feel uneasy. She timidly put her hand through the curtains, and took Miss Letitia's hand. The contact with the burning skin startled her. She turned away to the door, to call to the servant—when the sound of her aunt's voice hurried her back to the bed.

'Are you there, Bony?' the voice asked.

Was her mind getting clear

again? Emily tried the experiment of making a plain reply. 'Your niece is with you,' she said. 'Shall I call the servant?'

Miss Letitia's mind was still far away from Emily, and from the present time.

'The servant?' she repeated. 'All the servants but you, Bony, have been sent away. London's the place for us. No gossiping servants and no curious neighbours in London. Bury the horrid truth in London. Ah, you may well say I look anxious and wretched. I hate deception—and yet, it must be done. Why don't you help me? Why don't you find out where that vile woman lives? Only let me get at her—and I'll make Sara ashamed of herself.'

Emily's heart beat fast when she heard the woman's name. 'Sara' (as she and her school-fellows knew) was the baptismal name of Miss Jethro. Had her aunt alluded to the disgraced teacher, or to some other woman?

She waited eagerly to hear more. There was nothing to be heard. At this most interesting moment, the silence remained undisturbed.

In the fervour of her anxiety to set her doubts at rest, Emily's faith in her own good resolutions began to waver. The temptation to say something which might set her aunt talking again was too strong to be resisted—if she remained at the bedside. Despairing of herself, she rose and turned to the door. In the moment that passed, while she crossed the room, the very words occurred to her that would suit her purpose. Her cheeks were hot with shame—she hesitated—she looked back at the bed. The words passed her lips.

'Sara is only one of the woman's names,' she said. 'Do you like her other name?'

The rapidly-muttering tones broke out again instantly—but not in answer to Emily. The sound of a voice had encouraged Miss Letitia to pursue her own confused train of thought, and had stimulated the fast-failing capacity of speech to exert itself once more.

'No! no! He's too cunning for you, and too cunning for me. He doesn't leave letters about; he destroys them all. Did I say he was too cunning for us? It's false. We are too cunning for him. Who found the morsels of his letter in the basket? Who stuck them together? Ah, *we* know! Don't read it, Bony. "Dear Miss Jethro"—don't read it again. "Miss Jethro" in his letter; and "Sara," when he talks to himself in the garden. O, who would have believed it of him, if we hadn't seen it and heard it ourselves!'

There was no more doubt now.

But who was the man, so bitterly and so regretfully alluded to?

No: this time Emily held firmly by the resolution which bound her to respect the helpless position of her aunt. The speediest way of summoning Mrs. Ellmother would be to ring the bell. As she touched the handle a faint cry of suffering from the bed called her back.

'O, so thirsty!' murmured the failing voice—'so thirsty!'

She parted the curtains. The shrouded lamplight just showed her the green shade over Miss Letitia's eyes—the hollow cheeks below it—the arms laid helplessly on the bed-clothes. 'O, aunt, don't you know my voice? Don't you know Emily! Let me kiss you, dear!' Useless to plead with her; useless to kiss her; she only reiterated the words, 'So thirsty! so thirsty!' Emily raised the

poor tortured body with a patient caution which spared it pain, and put the glass to her aunt's lips. She drank the lemonade to the last drop. Refreshed for the moment, she spoke again—spoke to the visionary servant of her delirious fancy, while she rested in Emily's arms.

'For God's sake, take care how you answer, if she questions you. If *she* knew what *we* know! Are men ever ashamed? Ha! the vile woman! the vile woman!'

Her voice, sinking gradually, dropped to a whisper. The next few words that escaped her were muttered inarticulately. Little by little, the false energy of fever was wearing itself out. She lay silent and still. To look at her now was to look at the image of death. Once more, Emily kissed her—closed the curtains—and rang the bell.

Mrs. Ellmother failed to appear. Emily left the room to call to her.

Arrived at the top of the kitchen stairs, she noticed a slight change. The door below, which she had heard banged on first entering her aunt's room, now stood open. She called to Mrs. Ellmother.

A strange voice answered her. Its accent was soft and courteous; presenting the strongest imaginable contrast to the harsh tones of Miss Letitia's crabbed old maid.

'Is there anything I can do for you, Miss?'

The person making this polite inquiry appeared at the foot of the stairs—a plump and comely woman of middle age. She looked up at the young lady with a pleasant smile.

'I beg your pardon,' Emily said; 'I had no intention of disturbing you. I called to Mrs. Ellmother.'

The stranger advanced a little way up the stairs, and answered, 'Mrs. Ellmother is not here.'

'Do you expect her back soon?'

'Excuse me, Miss—I don't expect her back at all.'

'Do you mean to say that she has left the house?'

'Yes, Miss. She has left the house.'

CHAPTER XIV.

MRS. MOSEY.

EMILY's first act—after the discovery of Mrs. Ellmother's incomprehensible disappearance—was to invite the new servant to follow her into the sitting-room.

'Can you explain this?' she began.

'No, Miss.'

'May I ask if you have come here, by Mrs. Ellmother's invitation?'

'By Mrs. Ellmother's request, Miss.'

'Can you tell me how she came to make the request?'

'With pleasure, Miss. Perhaps—as you find me here, a stranger to yourself, in place of the customary servant—I ought to begin by giving you a reference?'

'And, perhaps (if you will be so kind), by mentioning your name,' Emily added.

'Thank you for reminding me, Miss. My name is Elizabeth Mosey. I am well known to the gentleman who attends Miss Letitia: Doctor Allday will speak to my character, and also to my experience as a nurse. If it would be in any way satisfactory to give you a second reference—'

'Quite needless, Mrs. Mosey.'

'Permit me to thank you again, Miss. I was at home this evening, when Mrs. Ellmother called at my lodgings. Says she, "I

have come here, Elizabeth, to ask a favour of you for old friendship's sake." Says I, "My dear, pray command me, whatever it may be." If this seems rather a hasty answer to make, before I knew what the favour was, might I ask you to bear in mind that Mrs. Ellmother put it to me "for old friendship's sake"—alluding to my late husband, and to the business which we carried on at that time? Through no fault of ours, we got into difficulties. Persons whom we had trusted proved unworthy. Not to trouble you further, I may say at once, we should have been ruined, if our old friend Mrs. Ellmother had not come forward, and trusted us with the savings of her lifetime. The money was all paid back again, before my husband's death. But I don't consider—and, I think you won't consider—that the obligation was paid back too. Prudent or not prudent, there is nothing Mrs. Ellmother can ask of me that I am not willing to do. If I have put myself in an awkward situation (and I don't deny that it looks so) this is the only excuse, Miss, that I can make for my conduct.'

Mrs. Mosey was too fluent, and too fond of hearing the sound of her own eminently persuasive voice. Making allowance for these little drawbacks, the impression that she produced was decidedly favourable; and, however rashly she might have acted, her motive was beyond reproach. Having said some kind words to this effect, Emily led her back to the main interest of her narrative.

'Did Mrs. Ellmother give no reason for leaving my aunt, at such a time as this?' she asked.

'The very words I said to her, Miss.'

'And what did she say, by way of reply?'

'She burst out crying—a thing I have never known her to do before, in an experience of twenty years.'

'And she really asked you to take her place here, at a moment's notice?'

'That was just what she did,' Mrs. Mosey answered. 'I had no need to tell her I was astonished; my looks spoke for me, no doubt. She's a hard woman in speech and manner, I admit. But there's more feeling in her than you would suppose. "If you are the good friend I take you for," she says, "don't ask me for reasons; I am doing what is forced on me, and doing it with a heavy heart." In my place, Miss, would you have insisted on her explaining herself, after that? The one thing I naturally wanted to know was, if I could speak to some lady, in the position of mistress here, before I ventured to intrude. Mrs. Ellmother understood that it was her duty to help me in this particular. Your poor aunt being out of the question, she mentioned you.'

'How did she speak of me? In an angry way?'

'No, indeed—quite the contrary. She says, "You will find Miss Emily at the cottage. She is Miss Letitia's niece. Everybody likes her—and everybody is right."'

'She really said that?'

'Those were her words. And, what is more, she gave me a message for you, at parting. "If Miss Emily is surprised" (that was how she put it) "give her my duty and good wishes; and tell her to remember what I said, when she took my place at her aunt's bedside." I don't presume to inquire what this means,' said Mrs. Mosey, respectfully ready to hear what it meant, if Emily would only be so good as to tell

her. 'I deliver the message, Miss, as it was delivered to me. After which, Mrs. Ellmother went her way, and I went mine.'

'Do you know where she went?'

'No, Miss.'

'Have you nothing more to tell me?'

'Nothing more; except that she gave me my directions, of course, about the nursing. I took them down in writing—and you will find them in their proper place, with the prescriptions and the medicines.'

Acting at once on this hint, Emily led the way to her aunt's room.

Miss Letitia was silent, when the new nurse softly parted the curtains—looked in—and drew them together again. Consulting her watch, Mrs. Mosey compared her written directions with the medicine-bottles on the table, and set one apart to be used at the appointed time. 'Nothing, so far, to alarm us,' she whispered. 'You look sadly pale and tired, Miss. Might I advise you to rest a little?'

'If there is any change, Mrs. Mosey—either for the better or the worse—of course you will let me know?'

'Certainly, Miss?'

Emily returned to the sitting-room: not to rest (after all that she had heard), but to think.

Amid much that was unintelligible, certain plain conclusions presented themselves to her mind.

After what the doctor had already said to Emily, on the subject of delirium generally, Mrs. Ellmother's proceedings became intelligible: they proved that she knew by experience the perilous course taken by her mistress's wandering thoughts, when they expressed themselves in words.

This explained the concealment of Miss Letitia's illness from her niece, as well as the reiterated efforts of the old servant to prevent Emily from entering the bedroom.

But the event which had just happened—that is to say, Mrs. Ellmother's sudden departure from the cottage—was not only of serious importance in itself, but pointed to a startling conclusion.

The faithful maid had left the mistress, whom she had loved and served, sinking under a fatal illness—and had put another woman in her place, careless of what that woman might discover by listening at the bedside—rather than confront Emily after she had been within hearing of her aunt, while the brain of the suffering woman was deranged by fever. There was the state of the case, in plain words.

In what frame of mind had Mrs. Ellmother adopted this desperate course of action?

To use her own expression, she had deserted Miss Letitia 'with a heavy heart.' To judge by her own language addressed to Mrs. Mosey, she had left Emily to the mercy of a stranger—animated, nevertheless, by sincere feelings of attachment and respect. That her fears had taken for granted suspicion which Emily had not felt, and discoveries which Emily had (as yet) not made, in no way modified the serious nature of the inference which her conduct justified. The disclosure which this woman dreaded—who could doubt it now!—directly threatened Emily's peace of mind. There was no disguising it: the innocent niece was associated with an act of deception, which had been, until that day, the undetected secret of the aunt and the aunt's maid.

In this conclusion, and in this

only, was to be found the rational explanation of Mrs. Ellmother's choice—placed between the alternatives of submitting to discovery by Emily or of leaving the house.

Poor Miss Letitia's writing-table stood near the window of the sitting-room. Shrinking from the further pursuit of thoughts which might end in disposing her mind to distrust of her dying aunt, Emily looked round in search of some employment sufficiently interesting to absorb her attention. The writing-table reminded her that she owed a letter to Cecilia. That helpful friend had surely the first claim to know why she had failed to keep her engagement with Sir Jervis Redwood.

After mentioning the telegram which had followed Mrs. Rook's arrival at the school, Emily's letter proceeded in these terms:—

'As soon as I had in some degree recovered myself, I informed Mrs. Rook of my aunt's serious illness.

'Although she carefully confined herself to commonplace expressions of sympathy, I could see that it was equally a relief to both of us to feel that we were prevented from being travelling companions. Don't suppose that I have taken a capricious dislike to Mrs. Rook—or that you are in any way to blame for the unfavourable impression which she has produced on me. I will make this plain when we meet. In the mean while, I need only tell you that I gave her a letter of explanation to present to Sir Jervis Redwood. I also informed him of my address in London; adding a request that he would forward your letter, in case you have written to me before you receive these lines.

'Kind Mr. Alban Morris accompanied me to the railway-

station, and arranged with the guard to take special care of me on the journey to London. We used to think him rather a heartless man. We were quite wrong. I don't know what his plans are for spending the summer holidays. Go where he may, I remember his kindness; my best wishes go with him.

'My dear, I must not sadden your enjoyment of your pleasant visit to the Engadine, by writing at any length of the sorrow that I am suffering. You know how I love my aunt, and how gratefully I have always felt her motherly goodness to me. The doctor does not conceal the truth. At her age, there is no hope: my father's last-left relation, my one, dearest friend, is dying.

'No! I must not forget that I have another friend—I must find some comfort in thinking of you.

'I do so long in my solitude for a letter from my dear Cecilia! Nobody comes to see me, when I most want sympathy; I am a stranger in this vast city. The members of my mother's family are settled in Australia: they have not even written to me, in all the long years that have passed since her death. You remember how cheerfully I used to look forward to my new life, on leaving school? Good-bye, my darling. While I can see your sweet face, in my thoughts, I don't despair—dark as it looks now—of the future that is before me.'

Emily had closed and addressed her letter, and was just rising from her chair, when she heard the voice of the new nurse at the door.

CHAPTER XV.

EMILY.

'MAY I say a word?' Mrs. Mosey inquired. She entered the

room—pale and trembling. Seeing that ominous change, Emily dropped back into her chair.

'Dead?' she said faintly.

Mrs. Mosey looked at her in vacant surprise.

'I wished to say, Miss, that your aunt has frightened me.'

Even that vague allusion was enough for Emily.

'You need say no more,' she replied. 'I know but too well how my aunt's mind is affected by the fever.'

Confused and frightened as she was, Mrs. Mosey still found relief in her customary flow of words.

'Many and many a person have I nursed in fever,' she announced. 'Many and many a person have I heard say strange things. Never yet, Miss, in all my experience—'

'Don't tell me of it!' Emily interposed.

'O, but I *must* tell you! In your own interests, Miss Emily—in your own interests. I won't be inhuman enough to leave you alone in the house to-night; but if this delirium goes on I must ask you to get another nurse. Shocking suspicions are lying in wait for me in that bedroom, as it were. I can't resist them as I ought, if I go back again, and hear your aunt saying, what she has been saying for the last half hour and more. Mrs. Ellmother has expected impossibilities of me; and Mrs. Ellmother must take the consequences. I don't say she didn't warn me—speaking, you will please to understand, in the strictest confidence. "Elizabeth," she says, "you know how wildly people talk, in Miss Letitia's present condition. Pay no heed to it," she says. "Let it go in at one ear and out at the other," she says. "If Miss Emily asks ques-

tions—you know nothing about it. If she's frightened—you know nothing about it. If she bursts into fits of crying that are dreadful to see, pity her, poor thing, but take no notice." All very well, and sounds like speaking out, doesn't it? Nothing of the sort! Mrs. Ellmother warns me to expect this, that, and the other. But there is one horrid thing (which I heard, mind, over and over again at your aunt's bedside) that she does not prepare me for; and that horrid thing is—Murder!"

At that last word, Mrs. Mosey dropped her voice to a whisper—and waited to see what effect she had produced.

Sorely tried already by the cruel perplexities of her position, Emily's courage failed to resist the first sensation of horror, aroused in her by the climax of the nurse's hysterical narrative. Encouraged by her silence, Mrs. Mosey went on. She lifted one hand with theatrical solemnity—and luxuriously terrified herself with her own horrors.

"An inn, Miss Emily; a lonely inn, somewhere in the country; and a comfortless room at the inn, with a make-shift bed at one end of it, and a make-shift bed at the other—I give you my word of honour, that was how your aunt put it. She spoke of two men next; two men asleep (you understand) in the two beds. I think she called them "gentlemen;" but I can't be sure, and I wouldn't deceive you—you know I wouldn't deceive you, for the world. Miss Letitia muttered and mumbled, poor soul. I own I was getting tired of listening—when she burst out plain again, in that one horrid word—O, Miss, don't be impatient! don't interrupt me!"

Emily did interrupt, nevertheless. In some degree at least she

had recovered herself. "No more of it!" she said—"I won't hear a word more."

But Mrs. Mosey was too resolutely bent on asserting her own importance, by making the most of the alarm that she had suffered, to be repressed by any ordinary method of remonstrance. Without paying the slightest attention to what Emily had said, she went on again more loudly and more excitably than ever.

"Listen, Miss—listen! The dreadful part of it is to come; you haven't heard about the two gentlemen yet. One of them was murdered—what do you think of that!—and the other (I heard your aunt say it, in so many words) committed the crime. Did Miss Letitia fancy she was addressing a lot of people, when *you* were nursing her? She called out, like a person making public proclamation, when *I* was in her room. "Whoever you are, good people" (she says), "a hundred pounds reward, if you find the runaway murderer. Search everywhere for a poor weak womanish creature, with rings on his little white hands. There's nothing about him like a man, except his voice—a fine round voice. You'll know him, my friends—the wretch, the monster—you'll know him by his voice." That was how she put it; I tell you again, that was how she put it. Did you hear her scream? Ah, my dear young lady, so much the better for you! "O, the horrid murder" (she says)—"hush it up!" I'll take my Bible oath before the magistrate," cried Mrs. Mosey, starting out of her chair. "Your aunt said, Hush it up!"

Emily crossed the room. The energy of her character was roused at last. She seized the foolish woman by the shoulders, forced her back in the chair, and looked

her straight in the face, without uttering a word.

For the moment, Mrs. Mosey was petrified. She had fully expected—having reached the end of her terrible story—to find Emily at her feet, entreating her not to carry out her intention of leaving the cottage the next morning; and she had determined, after her sense of her own importance had been sufficiently flattered, to grant the prayer of the helpless young lady. Those were her anticipations—and how had they been fulfilled! She had been treated like a mad woman in a state of revolt!

‘How dare you assault me!’ she asked piteously. ‘You ought to be ashamed of yourself. God knows I meant well.’

‘You are not the first person,’ Emily answered, quietly releasing her, ‘who has done wrong with the best intentions.’

‘I did my duty, Miss, when I told you what your aunt said.’

‘You forgot your duty when you listened to what my aunt said.’

‘Allow me to explain myself.’

‘No: not a word more on *that* subject shall pass between us. Remain in the room, if you please; I have something else to say.’

‘After the manner in which you have treated me, I don’t consider myself bound to obey your orders.’

‘I have no orders to give you; I have something to suggest in your own interests. Wait, and compose yourself.’

The purpose which had taken a foremost place in Emily’s mind rested on the firm foundation of her love and pity for her aunt.

Now that she had regained the power to think, she felt a hateful doubt pressed on her by Mrs. Mosey’s disclosures. Having taken for granted that there was

a foundation in truth for what she herself had heard in her aunt’s room, could she reasonably resist the conclusion that there must be a foundation in truth for what Mrs. Mosey had heard, under similar circumstances?

There was but one way of escaping from this dilemma—and Emily deliberately took it. She turned her back on her own convictions; and persuaded herself that she had been in the wrong, when she had attached importance to anything that her aunt had said, under the influence of fever. A man would have seen fatal obstacles to the attainment of this comforting point of view; a man would have remembered that Miss Letitia’s wanderings had included the names of two existing persons—Mrs. Rook and Miss Jethro. The woman, without stopping to reason or remember, accepted any conclusion which promised to secure her peace of mind. Freed from the oppression of her own misgivings, Emily resolved to face the prospect of a night’s solitude by the deathbed—rather than permit Mrs. Mosey to have a second opportunity of entering Miss Letitia’s room.

‘Do you mean to keep me waiting much longer, Miss?’

‘Not a moment longer, now you are composed again,’ Emily answered. ‘I have been thinking of what has happened; and it appears to me that we have both made mistakes, which a little reflection might have shown us how to avoid.’

‘In what particular, if you please?’ Mrs. Mosey inquired stiffly.

‘You would have acted more wisely, as I think,’ Emily proceeded, ‘if you had excused yourself from granting Mrs. Ellmother’s strange request, and had advised her to return to her duty. And I

should have acted more wisely if I had considered the trying circumstances in which I am placed, before I accepted the offer of your services.'

'If that means, Miss Emily, that you are sorry I ever set foot in this house, I'm sure I'm sorry too.'

'In that case, Mrs. Mosey, you will be all the readier to accept the suggestion which I wish to offer. I have no fear of remaining here by myself for the next few hours. Why should you put off your departure until the doctor comes to-morrow morning? There is really no objection to your leaving me to-night.'

'I beg your pardon, Miss; there is an objection. I have already told you I can't reconcile it to my conscience to leave you here by yourself. I am not an inhuman woman,' said Mrs. Mosey, putting her handkerchief to her eyes—smitten with pity for herself.

Emily tried the effect of a conciliatory reply. 'I am grateful for your kindness in offering to stay with me,' she said.

'Very good of you, I'm sure,' Mrs. Mosey answered ironically. 'But for all that, you persist in sending me away.'

'I persist in thinking that there is no necessity for my keeping you here until to-morrow.'

'Oh, have it your own way! I am not reduced to forcing my company on anybody.'

Mrs. Mosey put her handkerchief in her pocket, and asserted her dignity. With head erect and slowly-marching steps, she walked out of the room. Emily was left in the cottage, alone with her dying aunt.

CHAPTER XVI.

MISS JETHRO.

A FORTNIGHT after the disappearance of Mrs. Ellmother, and the dismissal of Mrs. Mosey, Doctor Allday entered his consulting-room; punctual to the hour at which he was accustomed to receive patients.

An occasional wrinkling of his eyebrows, accompanied by an intermittent restlessness in his movements, appeared to indicate some disturbance of this worthy man's professional composure. His mind was indeed not at ease. Even the inexcitable old doctor had felt the attraction which had already conquered three such dissimilar people as Alban Morris, Cecilia Wyvil, and Francine de Sor. He was thinking of Emily.

A ring at the door-bell announced the arrival of the first patient.

The servant introduced a tall lady, dressed simply and elegantly in dark apparel. Noticeable features, of a Jewish cast—worn and haggard, but still preserving their grandeur of form—were visible through her veil. She moved with grace and dignity; and she stated her object in consulting Doctor Allday with the ease of a well-bred woman.

'I come to ask your opinion, sir, on the state of my heart,' she said; 'and I am recommended by a patient, who has consulted you with advantage to herself.' She placed a card on the doctor's writing-desk, and added: 'I have become acquainted with the lady, by being one of the lodgers in her house.'

The doctor recognised the name—and the usual proceedings ensued. After careful examination, he arrived at a favourable conclusion. 'I may tell you at once,' he said—'there is no reason to

be alarmed about the state of your heart.'

'I have never felt any alarm about myself,' she answered quietly. 'A sudden death is an easy death. If one's affairs are settled it seems, on that account, to be the death to prefer. My object was to settle *my* affairs—such as they are—if you had considered my life to be in danger. Is there nothing the matter with me?'

'I don't say that,' the doctor replied. 'The action of your heart is very feeble. Take the medicine that I shall prescribe; pay a little more attention to eating and drinking than ladies usually do; don't run up-stairs, and don't fatigue yourself by violent exercise—and I see no reason why you shouldn't live to be an old woman.'

'God forbid!' the lady said to herself. She turned away, and looked out of the window with a bitter smile.

Doctor Allday wrote his prescription. 'Are you likely to make a long stay in London?' he asked.

'I am here for a little while only. Do you wish to see me again?'

'I should like to see you once more, before you go away—if you can make it convenient. What name shall I put on the prescription?'

'Miss Jethro.'

'A remarkable name,' the doctor said, in his matter-of-fact way.

Miss Jethro's bitter smile showed itself again. Without otherwise noticing what Doctor Allday had said, she laid the consultation-fee on his table. At the same moment, the footman appeared, with a letter. 'From Miss Emily Brown,' he said. 'No answer required.'

He held the door open as he delivered the message; seeing that Miss Jethro was about to leave the

room. She dismissed him by a gesture; and, returning to the table, pointed to the letter.

'Was your correspondent lately a pupil at Miss Ladd's school?' she inquired.

'My correspondent has just left Miss Ladd,' the doctor answered.

'Are you a friend of hers?'

'I am acquainted with her.'

'You would be doing the poor child a kindness, if you would go and see her. She has no friends in London.'

'Pardon me—she has an aunt.'

'Her aunt died, a week since.'

'Are there no other relations?'

'None. A melancholy state of things, isn't it? She would have been absolutely alone in the house, if I had not sent one of my women servants to stay with her for the present. Did you know her father?'

Miss Jethro passed over the question, as if she had not heard it. 'Has the young lady dismissed her aunt's servants?' she asked.

'Her aunt kept but one servant, ma'am. The woman has spared Miss Emily the trouble of dismissing her.' He briefly alluded to Mrs. Ellmother's desertion of her mistress. 'I can't explain it,' he said when he had done. 'Can you?'

'What makes you think, sir, that I can help you? I never even heard of the servant—and the mistress was a stranger to me.'

At Doctor Allday's age a man is not easily discouraged by reproof, even when it is administered by a handsome woman. 'I thought you might have known Miss Emily's father,' he persisted.

Miss Jethro rose, and wished him good-morning. 'I must not occupy any more of your valuable time,' she said.

'Suppose you wait a minute?' the doctor suggested.

Impenetrable as ever, he rang the bell. 'Any patients in the waiting-room?' he inquired. 'You see I have time to spare,' he resumed, when the man had replied in the negative. 'I take an interest in this poor girl; and I thought—'

'If you think that I take an interest in her, too,' Miss Jethro interposed, 'you are perfectly right.—I knew her father,' she added abruptly; the allusion to Emily having apparently reminded her of the question which she had hitherto declined to notice.

'In that case,' Doctor Allday proceeded, 'I want a word of advice. Won't you sit down?'

She took a chair in silence. An irregular movement in the lower part of her veil seemed to indicate that she was breathing with difficulty. The doctor observed her with close attention. 'Let me see my prescription again,' he said. Having added an ingredient, he handed it back with a word of explanation. 'Your nerves are more out of order than I supposed. The hardest disease to cure that I know of is—worry.'

The hint could hardly have been plainer; but it was lost on Miss Jethro. Whatever her troubles might be, her medical adviser was not made acquainted with them. Quietly folding up the prescription, she reminded him that he had proposed to ask her advice.

'In what way can I be of service to you?' she inquired.

'I am afraid I must try your patience,' the doctor acknowledged, 'if I am to answer that question plainly.'

With these prefatory words, he described the events that had followed Mrs. Mosey's appearance at the cottage. 'I am only doing justice to this foolish woman,' he continued, 'when I tell you

that she came here, after she had left Miss Emily, and did her best to set matters right. I went to the poor girl directly—and I felt it my duty, after looking at her aunt, not to leave her alone for that night. When I got home, the next morning, whom do you think I found waiting for me? Mrs. Ellmother!'

He stopped—in the expectation that Miss Jethro would express some surprise. Not a word passed her lips.

'Mrs. Ellmother's object was to ask how her mistress was going on,' the doctor proceeded. 'Every day, while Miss Letitia still lived, she came here to make the same inquiry—without a word of explanation. On the day of the funeral, there she was at the church, dressed in deep mourning; and, as I can personally testify, crying bitterly. When the ceremony was over—can you believe it?—she slipped away before Miss Emily or I could speak to her. We have seen nothing more of her, and heard nothing more, from that time to this.'

He stopped again. The silent lady still listened without making any remark.

'Have you no opinion to express?' the doctor asked bluntly.

'I am waiting,' Miss Jethro answered.

'Waiting—for what?'

'I haven't heard yet, why you want my advice.'

Doctor Allday's observation of humanity had hitherto reckoned want of caution among the deficient moral qualities in the natures of women. He set down Miss Jethro as a remarkable exception to a general rule.

'I want you to advise me as to the right course to take with Miss Emily,' he said. 'She has assured me she attaches no serious im-

portance to her aunt's wanderings, when the poor old lady's fever was at its worst. I don't doubt that she speaks the truth—but I have my own reasons for being afraid that she is deceiving herself. Will you bear this in mind?

'Yes—if it's necessary.'

'In plain words, Miss Jethro, you think I am still wandering from the point. I have got to the point. Yesterday, Miss Emily told me that she hoped to be soon composed enough to examine the papers left by her aunt.'

Miss Jethro suddenly turned in her chair, and looked at Doctor Allday.

'Are you beginning to feel interested?' the doctor asked mischievously.

She neither acknowledged nor denied it. 'Go on!—was all she said.

'I don't know how *you* feel,' he proceeded; 'I am afraid of the discoveries which she may make; and I am strongly tempted to advise her to leave the proposed examination to her aunt's lawyer. Is there anything in your knowledge of Miss Emily's late father, which tells you that I am right?'

'Before I reply,' said Miss Jethro, 'it may not be amiss to let the young lady speak for herself.'

'How is she to do that?' the doctor asked.

Miss Jethro pointed to the writing-table. 'Look there,' she said. 'You have not yet opened Miss Emily's letter.'

CHAPTER XVII.

DOCTOR ALLDAY.

ABSORBED in the effort to overcome his patient's reserve, the doctor had forgotten Emily's letter. He opened it immediately.

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After reading the first sentence, he looked up with an expression of annoyance. 'She has begun the examination of the papers already,' he said.

'Then I can be of no further use to you,' Miss Jethro rejoined. She made a second attempt to leave the room.

Doctor Allday turned to the next page of the letter. 'Stop!' he cried. 'She has found something—and here it is.'

He held up a small printed handbill, which had been placed between the first and second pages. 'Suppose you look at it?' he said.

'Whether I am interested in it or not?' Miss Jethro asked.

'You may be interested in what Miss Emily says about it in her letter.'

'Do you propose to show me her letter?'

'I propose to read it to you.'

Miss Jethro took the handbill without further objection. It was expressed in these words:—

'MURDER. £100 REWARD.—Whereas a murder was committed, on the thirtieth September, 1877, at the Hand-in-Hand Inn, in the village of Zeeland, Hampshire, the above reward will be paid to any person or persons whose exertions shall lead to the arrest and conviction of the suspected murderer. Name not known. Supposed age, between twenty and thirty years. A well-made man, of small stature. Fair complexion, delicate features, clear blue eyes. Hair light, and cut rather short. Clean shaven, with the exception of narrow half-whiskers. Small white well-shaped hands. Wears valuable rings on the two last fingers of the left hand. Dressed neatly in a dark-grey tourist's suit. Carried a knapsack, as if on a pedestrian excursion. Remarkably good voice, smooth, full, and persuasive. Ingratiating manners. Apply to the Chief Inspector; Metropolitan Police Office, London.'

Miss Jethro laid aside the handbill without any visible appearance of agitation. The doctor took up Emily's letter, and read as follows:

'You will be as much relieved as I was, my kind friend, when you look at the paper enclosed.

T

I found it loose in a blank book, with cuttings from newspapers, and odd announcements of lost property, and other curious things (all huddled together between the leaves), which my aunt no doubt intended to set in order and fix in their proper places. She must have been thinking of her book, poor soul, in her last illness. Here is the origin of those "terrible words" which frightened stupid Mrs. Mosey! Is it not encouraging to have discovered such a confirmation of my opinion as this? I feel a new interest in looking over the papers that still remain to be examined—'

Before he could get to the end of the sentence Miss Jethro's agitation broke through her reserve.

'Do what you proposed to do?' she burst out vehemently. 'Stop her at once from carrying her examination any further! If she hesitates, insist on it!'

At last Doctor Allday had triumphed! 'It has been a long time coming,' he remarked, in his cool way; 'and it's all the more welcome on that account. You dread the discoveries she may make, Miss Jethro, as I do. And you know what those discoveries may be.'

'What I do know, or don't know, is of no importance,' she answered sharply.

'Excuse me, it is of very serious importance. I have no authority over this poor girl—I am not even an old friend. You tell me to insist. Help me to declare honestly that I know of circumstances which justify me; and I may insist to some purpose.'

Miss Jethro lifted her veil for the first time, and eyed him searchingly.

'I believe I can trust you,' she said. 'Now listen! The one consideration on which I consent to open my lips, is consideration for

Miss Emily's tranquillity. Promise me absolute secrecy, on your word of honour.'

He gave the promise.

'I want to know one thing, first,' Miss Jethro proceeded. 'Did she tell you—as she once told me—that her father had died of heart-complaint?'

'Yes.'

'Did you put any questions to her?'

'I asked how long ago it was.'

'And she told you?'

'She told me.'

'You wish to know, Doctor Allday, what discoveries Miss Emily may yet make, among her aunt's papers. Judge for yourself, when I tell you that she has been deceived about her father's death.'

'Do you mean that he is still living?'

'I mean that she has been deceived—purposely deceived—about the *manner* of his death.'

'Who was the wretch who did it?'

'You are wronging the dead, sir! The truth can only have been concealed out of the purest motives of love and pity. I don't desire to disguise the conclusion at which I have arrived, after what I have heard from yourself. The person responsible must be Miss Emily's aunt—and the old servant must have been in her confidence. Remember! You are bound in honour not to repeat to any living creature what I have just said.'

The doctor followed Miss Jethro to the door. 'You have not yet told me,' he said, 'how her father died.'

'I have no more to tell you.'

With those words she left him.

He rang for his servant. To wait until the hour at which he was accustomed to go out, might be to leave Emily's peace of mind

at the mercy of an accident. 'I am going to the cottage,' he said. 'If anybody wants me, I shall be back in a quarter of an hour.'

On the point of leaving the house, he remembered that Emily would probably expect him to return the handbill. As he took it up, the first lines caught his eye: he read the date at which the murder had been committed, for the second time. On a sudden the ruddy colour left his face.

'Good God!' he cried, 'her father was murdered—and that woman was concerned in it.'

Following the impulse that urged him, he secured the handbill in his pocket-book—snatched up the card which his patient had presented as her introduction—and instantly left the house. He called the first cab that passed him, and drove to Miss Jethro's lodgings.

'Gone'—was the servant's answer when he inquired for her. He insisted on speaking to the landlady. 'Hardly ten minutes have passed,' he said, 'since she left my house.'

'Hardly ten minutes have passed,' the landlady replied, 'since that message was brought here by a boy.'

The message had been evidently written in great haste: 'I am unexpectedly obliged to leave London. A bank-note is enclosed in payment of my debt to you. I will send for my luggage.'

The doctor withdrew.

'Unexpectedly obliged to leave London,' he repeated, as he got into the cab again. 'Her flight condemns her: not a doubt of it now.—As fast as you can!' he shouted to the man; directing him to drive to Emily's cottage.

(To be continued.)

THE ROMANCE OF ANASTASIA ROBINSON.

By J. FITZGERALD MOLLOY,

AUTHOR OF 'COURT LIFE BELOW-STAIRS,' 'WHAT HAST THOU DONE?' 'IT IS NO WONDER,' ETC.

CHARLES MORDAUNT, commonly called the eccentric Earl of Peterborough, first saw light in the year 1659. His father had been a staunch adherent to the Stuart cause in its darkest days, had plotted against the Commonwealth, been thrown into the Tower, had been brought up on a charge of treason before the stern Cromwell, and had narrowly escaped decapitation on Tower Hill. At the Restoration, Charles II. was not unmindful of the services rendered his cause by this loyal subject, John Mordaunt; he therefore raised him to the Peerage, conferred many favours on him, and had his eldest son Charles, the subject of the present memoir, brought up at Court.

The lad was accordingly surrounded by a brilliant and licentious throng of courtiers, who cared little for religion and less for morality; who treated the world as a veritable stage constructed for their amusement, where they were to eat, drink, and make merry as long as might be. In a short time they contrived to impart their principles to young Charles Mordaunt; and before he arrived at the age of seventeen he was as good a courtier as any of them in all but loyalty. He thoroughly despised morality, was an avowed sceptic, and a thorough cynic; his cynicism, indeed, even reached Royalty itself: he began to have doubts regarding the utility of his king; and to escape from a Court which

had become abhorrent to him, he embarked in Admiral Torrington's ship, then proceeding to join the British Fleet sent out to the Mediterranean under Sir John Narborough, in order to protect British merchant ships from Algerine corsairs.

During an early engagement he gave evidence of that courage which afterwards rendered him famous; three years later, the Dey of Algiers submissively signed a treaty of peace with England, and Charles Mordaunt returned to find that by the death of his father he had succeeded to his titles. To enter into the particulars of his subsequent active and restless life would be to write the history of a period extending over six reigns. Gifted with indomitable energy, great courage, and splendid abilities, his achievements by land and sea became the wonder of the age. He won fame as a sailor, distinguished himself as a soldier, astonished the Senate by his eloquence, and risked his life in a conspiracy; on the other hand, the accomplishments that in social life rendered his society a boon were no less remarkable in their way. He was a wit of the first water, a conversationalist whose brilliancy was universally lauded, a poet of some note, a correspondent whose letters were appreciated for their polished diction and finished courtesy in an age when correspondence was regarded as an art, and a gallant whose affairs of the heart were

frequent and notable. Pope was told by one who had known Lord Peterborough when he was ambassador at Turin, that he sometimes dictated to nine amanuenses at the same moment. 'He walked round the room, and told each in his turn what he was to write. One, perhaps, was a letter to the Emperor, another to an old friend, a third to a mistress, a fourth to a statesman, and so on; and yet he carried so many and so different connections in his head all at the same time.' Voltaire spoke of him as being 'one of the most extraordinary men his country ever produced, a man who resembled in every respect those heroes with whose exploits the inventive imagination of the Spaniards has filled so many romances.'

In appearance, this man of much renown and varied talents was small and thin, with clearly-cut prominent features, bright eyes and brown hair—altogether a prepossessing face, which indicated his quick and volatile temperament. To complete his strange character, he had a reputation for eccentricity, and his actions at times afforded considerable amusement and gossip to the whole town. One day, it is narrated of this worthy Earl that, when driving in his coach through the Strand, he spied a well-known player, arrayed in all the glory of a court suit, picking his way across the ill-paved and muddy thoroughfare with dainty grace, lest he should splash the immaculate splendour of his white silk stockings. My lord was at first vastly amused at the sight; but his amusement suddenly gave place to a temptation to plague the poor player; and he immediately jumped out of his coach, drew his sword, and followed him. This son of Thespis had never before received such a fright. He

believed his life in danger, and, totally regardless of his stockings, took flight, the Earl pursuing him and pricking his calves, as he splashed, now wholly indifferent to his magnificence, through the mud and liquid filth of narrow alleys and dingy byways. When he was splashed from head to foot, the Earl gave up the chase, and, gravely reseating himself in his coach, proceeded on his way.

On another occasion, while riding through the streets, he was mistaken by the mob for the great and parsimonious Duke of Marlborough, who was then most unpopular. Lord Peterborough, hearing himself hooted at and threatened with violence, guessed at the mistake, and, coolly turning his horse towards the crowd, said, in his most courteous manner, 'Gentlemen, I have two ways of convincing you that I am not the great personage you take me to be: first, I have but five guineas in my pocket; and secondly, they are at your service.' He then flung them amongst the mob, whose jeers and threats were now turned to cheers and prayers.

In 1714, the year when George I. arrived in a kingdom which was to be his henceforth, Lord Peterborough returned to London from a diplomatic mission abroad. He was coldly received at Court; but this treatment at the hands of Royalty little troubled his philosophic spirit. He retired to his villa at Parson's Green—described by Bolingbroke as a bower 'with shady walks and cool retreats'—and once more sought the companionship of his old friends, 'little Mr. Pope,' Gay the poet, Sir Godfrey Kneller the celebrated portrait-painter, Matthew Prior, the eccentric Dean Swift, and other wits and celebrities of the day, whom he gathered round

his hospitable board, and with whom he delighted in interchanging flashes of wit and repartee.

Swift was always at his best in the presence of the Earl, whose eccentricity almost equalled his own; and, in return, Peterborough betrayed an honest friendship for the Dean, which he was ever anxious to prove. On the occasion of one of his sudden returns to London, the first house Lord Peterborough drove to was that of his friend Harley, afterwards Lord Oxford. It was Saturday evening, and Harley was entertaining some friends at dinner; but, on hearing Peterborough's name, he went out to greet him, and brought him in. When the Earl entered, he saw Swift amongst the guests, and, rushing over to him, he embraced and kissed him, chiding him the while for not having written to him more frequently. 'Ah,' the eccentric Dean used to say, when speaking of his friend, 'I love the hang-dog dearly.'

To convince Peterborough of his affection, the reverend churchman wrote some verses on his friend, which he read aloud at one of those pleasant reunions at Parson's Green, and at which none laughed so heartily as he with whose characteristics they so freely dealt. A few lines will show the style of the poem:

'Mordanto fills the trump of fame,
The Christian world his deeds proclaim,
And prints are crowded with his name.
In journeys he outrides the post,
Sits up till midnight with his host,
Talks politics and gives the toast;
Knows every prince in Europe's face;
Flies like a squib from place to place,
And travels not, but runs a race.
Mordanto gallops on alone,
The roads are with his followers strown,
This breaks a girth and that a bone.

A skeleton in outward figure,
His meagre corps, though full of vigour,
Would halt behind him were it bigger.
So wonderful his expedition,
When you have not the least suspicion,
He's with you like an apparition.'

These little dinners at the villa in Parson's Green, where wine and wit flowed and sparkled, were usually cooked by the Earl, who took a special pride in this acquirement, which he considered he had developed to the rank of a high art. He had, during the war in Spain, he said, been often in danger of death from starvation, and had there learned the preliminaries of an accomplishment not always fully appreciated. About an hour before dinner he would retire from the company of his guests, don a white linen suit, cook his little banquet; then return to his friends in proper apparel, and dine with heartiness from the dishes his hands had prepared. Here he would, over his wine, fight all his battles o'er again, recount his expeditions and his hairbreadth escapes by flood and field in a manner at once vivid and impressive. Lying back in his chair, Dean Swift would listen to him with eager attention, and then slowly add, in a quiet tone, 'Tis the ramblingest lying rogue on earth.'

It so happened that, a few months before Lord Peterborough's return to town in 1714, a young lady of considerable musical talent, who rejoiced in the name of Anastasia Robinson, had made her appearance on the stage as a public singer. Her figure, as described in the language of the day, was elegant: she was about the middle height, without much pretensions to beauty, yet comely, and possessing an air of modesty which was in those days as rare to one engaged in her profession as it was charming. Her father was a portrait-painter, who had descended from a good old family in Leicestershire. Shortly after his marriage he had gone abroad to study art; and it was in Italy, the land of song, that his little

daughter first gave proof of the talent which was afterwards to render her distinguished. Here, too, she received her first lessons in singing, which, on her father's return to England, were continued by Dr. Croft, then a man of eminence in his profession, who predicted great achievements for his pupil.

While she was yet young, her father lost the use of his sight, a calamity that threatened his helpless family with direst poverty, the only chance of escape from which lay in utilising Anastasia's talents; and, reluctant as he was that she should become a member of a profession notorious for its loose morality, he was at last obliged to consent to her public appearance. She therefore took some finishing lessons from Bononcini, then a master of celebrity, and soon made her *début* at the York Buildings concerts, where she accompanied herself on the harpsichord.

From the first her success was assured. Though her voice lacked brilliancy, it possessed a sweetness and charm which quickly rendered her a public favourite. Gratified by her success, her father took a house in Golden Square, then a fashionable district, and, receiving the patronage of several fine ladies, he established weekly concerts under his roof, at which his daughter sang. To these it became the fashion to throng; and amongst those who continually attended was my Lord Peterborough. He had married whilst young, but had lost his wife and his two sons on one fatal day by smallpox, then the scourge of the age; and though he had since earned the reputation of being a man of gallantry, he had never offered to raise one of the objects of his devotion to the rank of a peeress.

His heart was now, however,

deeply touched by the quiet grace and modest demeanour of Anastasia Robinson; and before long the brilliant wit, brave soldier, fiery politician, and eccentric man of fashion acknowledged the fascination which this young and timid girl exercised over him. She was not without having many admirers, amongst whom was General Hamilton, a man of distinction, who was much younger than Lord Peterborough, and, as the object of his admiration soon discovered, a person of much less worth. In a short time the General avowed his love; but his offers being dishonourable, though advantageous, were promptly declined.

Meanwhile Miss Robinson studied hard to advance herself in her profession, made her appearance on the operatic stage, became an acknowledged *prima donna*, and earned an income of two thousand pounds a year; a sum that placed her family in a state of comparative affluence. All this time Lord Peterborough's attentions to the young girl continued; absence from town and travel had not the effect of removing her memory from his mind, and about three years after he first became acquainted with her he offered to make her his wife. Though many years younger than the eccentric Earl, she confessed her love for him, and consented that their marriage should be kept private 'till a convenient time for making it known should arrive.' The marriage was solemnised in the presence of Lady Oxford, the daughter-in-law of the bridegroom's old friend.

The new-made Countess, satisfied to conceal her rank at her husband's desire, continued to sing in public, and often in company with other public singers attended his musical entertainments, not as the hostess, but as an artist.

Though not residing under the same roof with him, Lord Peterborough's intimacy with her became observed, and soon became a delightful morsel of scandal in a scandal-loving age. This, Anastasia Robinson, conscious of her integrity, bore for the sake of the man she loved, until roused one day by an insult received from an Italian singer named Senesino, with whom she was rehearsing an opera. She complained to Lord Peterborough, who happened to be in the theatre. The infuriated peer rushed on the unhappy singer, who was on the stage at that moment, dragged him behind the scenes, violently caned him as long as he was able, and finally compelled him to ask the lady's pardon on his knees.

The news of this adventure, which had so delicious a spice of scandal, flew through the town with the rapidity of lightning. Lady Mary Wortley Montagu scoffed at the peer whom that exceedingly bitter woman hated; and Lord Stanhope, referring to him as 'an old Don Quixote,' was summoned by him to mortal combat, which was only prevented by the worthy principals being placed under arrest. The result of this sensation was that Anastasia retired from the stage and sought peace in private life. Her father being now dead, she with her mother moved to a small cottage at Fulham, convenient to Lord Peterborough's villa at Parson's Green.

Though treating his wife, whom he called his 'best friend,' with due respect and much affection, yet this erratic man did not restrain his fancy from straying to other members of the fair sex, amongst whom was Mrs. Howard, afterwards Countess of Suffolk. This lady's society had been purchased from her husband for the

sum of twenty thousand pounds by George II., who, tiring of her friendship some years afterwards, flung her aside as 'a deaf, stupid old woman who plagued him.' She has been described as 'a tall fine figure in a green taffety dress set off with rose-coloured ribbons, fair hair and skin, a white muslin apron trimmed with delicate lace, ruffles of the same, a white and rounded arm, a chip hat with flowers placed quite at the back of the light hair, which leaves the white broad forehead exposed.' Swift said of her she was 'an excellent companion for men of the best accomplishments who have nothing to ask.' Lord Peterborough was one of those, and a friendship sprang up between them which was mainly carried on by letters full of the elaborate courtesy and strewn with the flowery compliments which marked the correspondence of the period.

In one of his epistles Lord Peterborough writes to Mrs. Howard, 'As I can as well live without meat and sleep as without thinking of her who has possession of my soul; so, to find some relief in never having any conversation with this adored lady, I have been forced when alone to make many a dialogue between her and myself. . . . Commonly, lovers are animated by the gay look, the blooming cheek, and the red lips of their mistress. But, Heavens! what do I feel when I see anguish and paleness invade that charming face! My soul is in a mutiny against those powers that suffer it, and my heart perfectly melts away in tenderness. But for whom have I such concern? For that dear lady who hardly thinks of me, or scarce regretteth she makes me wretched.'

In order to answer his letter with an elegance equal to his, Mrs. Howard summoned the poet

Gay to her aid ; and between them they concocted epistles which delighted the eccentric and love-stricken peer. A sentence from one of these will indicate the general style of the whole. 'Your lordship's caution,' writes Mrs. Howard, 'about not showing your letter I shall sacredly observe, lest I give any person occasion to censure your lordship of flattery and myself of credulity.'

From his villa at Parson's Green Lord Peterborough occasionally moved to Bevis Mount, another residence of his, which, though small, was charmingly situated. Raised on an eminence, it overlooked the Southampton Water and the picturesque Itchen Ferry, and afforded a glimpse of the distant woods of Netley Abbey. It was here that the Earl was seized with a violent attack of illness, when he at once wrote to his wife, soliciting her to come and take up her residence at Bevis Mount, in order that she might nurse him ; but this she, who had been always gentle and complacent, refused to do unless he permitted her to wear her wedding-ring. For a while he, with all that eccentric obstinacy which had prevented him acknowledging his marriage, refused to grant her request ; but, finding her firm in her resolution of otherwise declining to visit him, he agreed to her condition, when she at once came and nursed him with the greatest tenderness. Under her care he soon recovered, and was once more able to enjoy the society of his old friends Pope and Swift, who came from town to stay with him in his retreat by the Southampton Water.

He seldom visited London, but contented himself with laying out his gardens, occasionally working in his grounds, and overseeing some buildings which he was add-

ing to his cottage. 'I must give you some good news in relation to myself,' he writes to Pope at this time, 'because I know you wish me well. I am cured of some diseases in my old age which tormented me very much in my youth. I was possess with violent and uneasy passions, such as a peevish concern for truth and a saucy love for my country. When a Christian priest preached against the spirit of the Gospel, when an English judge determined against Magna Charta, when the minister acted against common sense, I used to fret. Now, sir, let what will happen, I keep myself in temper ; as I have no flattering hopes, so I banish all useless fears ; but as to the things of this world I find myself in a condition beyond expectation.'

His health continued well until 1732, when he was in his seventy-third year ; then he was attacked by a severe and dangerous illness which threatened his existence. Being all his lifetime a philosopher, he now looked with calmness on death ; the world, he saw, had become so indifferent to him that he could even amuse himself with the thoughts of going out of it. Notwithstanding all his boasted carelessness, he took care to consult the doctors, and they ordered him abroad as the only means of prolonging his life. He then determined to go to Lisbon, but his wife refused to accompany him unless her position was fully acknowledged. Even now he hesitated to accord her this tardy act of justice ; but she proved as resolute as she had done on a former occasion, and at last he consented to do as she desired. He therefore appointed a day for all his relatives to meet him at St. James's Palace, in the apartments of his nephew, who was, tutor to Prince William, second

son of George II., who afterwards earned for himself the appellation of 'Billy the Butcher.'

His wife was amongst those bidden to be present, but had no idea of the strange scene she was summoned to witness. When all those whom he had invited had at last assembled, he addressed them with much of his old spirit and all his former eloquence. He commenced by describing a woman of spotless purity, gifted by Heaven with every virtue, of exemplary patience, of enduring affection, of rare talents and high accomplishments. To such a being, he said, he owed his life; she had been his blessing in health, his comfort in sorrow and affliction; and to her his heart had done the justice which his weak vanity had refused. He had loved her with true and abiding affection, and he now wished, he added, taking Anastasia by the hand, to proclaim her his best friend, his lawful wife.

His words deeply touched all who were present, and had such an effect on his wife that she fainted, and was carried away from a scene which required but this last act to render it a veritable drama of real life.

A short time after this a second attack threatened his life once more, and it was necessary he should undergo a painful operation; when it was over his old friend Pope went to see him for the last time. It was in the dusk of evening when the poet arrived, and he found the Earl sitting on a couch, entertaining company with conversation that retained much of its former sprightliness. 'When the candles were brought in,' says Pope, 'I was amazed to see he looked more like a ghost than a living creature.'

When they were alone the dying man spoke to him of his suf-

ferings, and of his hopes of being able to finish the gardens and buildings, that his wife might be able to enjoy them after his death. He went on to say he had now done full justice to her; that he was under obligations to her beyond expression; and that in order to avoid all difficulties that might otherwise arise after his death he had gone through the marriage service with her a second time, as the clergyman who first married them was dead; he now, he added, felt his present state as a heaven to what was past.

In a letter to Martha Blount, Pope gives an interesting description of this visit. 'I lay in the next room to him,' he says, 'where I found he was awake and called for help most hours of the night, sometimes crying out for pain. In the morning he got up at nine, and was carried into his garden in a chair; he fainted away twice there. He fell about twelve into a violent pang, which made his limbs all shake and his teeth chatter, and for some time he lay as cold as death. His wound was dressed (which is done constantly four times a day), and he grew gay, and sat at dinner with ten people. After this he was again in torment for a quarter of an hour; and as soon as the pang was over was carried into the garden to the workmen, talked of his history, and declaimed with great spirit against the meanness of the present great men and ministers, and the decay of public spirit and honour. It is impossible to conceive how much his heart is above his condition; he is dying every other hour, and obstinate to do whatever he has a mind to. He has with him day after day not only all his relations, but every creature of the town of Southampton that pleases. He lies on his couch and receives them,

though he says little. When his pains come he desires them to walk out, but invites them to stay to dine or sup. This man was never born to die like other men, any more than to live like them.'

When Pope took his leave he received from him a watch which the King of Sicily had given Lord Peterborough, bearing the original donor's arms and insignia. 'You will have something to put you

every day in mind of me,' said the dying man. He set sail for Lisbon, accompanied by his devoted wife, in August 1723, and died there the following October. Lady Peterborough returned to England, and took up her residence at Bevis Mount, where she continued to live in seclusion until she reached the advanced age of eighty-eight. She died retaining the respect and affection of all who knew her.

THE FLOWER-POT.

Englished from Théophile Gautier.

SOMETIMES a child will find a little grain,
And, charmed with its live colours, run in haste
To plant it in a pot of porcelain,
With dragons blue and flowers fantastic chased.

He goes. The root strikes snakelike either side,
Comes up from earth a little tree straightway;
Daily its fibrous feet plunge further wide,
Until the vessel shivers, on a day.

The child returns. He sees, all-marvelling,
The swordlike plant wave o'er the broken pot.
He fain would tear it up; the strong stems cling;
He strives; his fingers bleed; he moves it not.

Thus love has budded in my wondering heart.
I thought to sow some spring-flower; but I see
An aloe, whose strong roots have wrenched apart
The pot of porcelain painted wondrously.

ARTHUR W. SYMONS.

A BOURSE STORY.

'A PLEASANT prospect for a fellow in my position!' muttered Monsieur Anatole Fitzeliez to himself, as he paced up and down his tiny bachelor's apartment in the Rue Rochecouart, his hands plunged deep in his pockets, and his countenance expressive of anything but contentment—'a very pleasant prospect, truly! Was ever anything so unlucky! Here am I, a poor devil of a supernumerary at the Cour des Comptes, with a miserable salary of eighteen hundred francs, and nothing to look forward to but the remote contingency of inheriting from an uncle who is as hale and hearty as the Pont Neuf. And just at the very moment when he is inclined to be liberal, and old Champfort has all but consented to my marriage with Léonie, I must needs make an idiot of myself last night at the Variétés, and get involved in a quarrel with a man I never saw before in my life! "Jules Bonnavet, Rue Montorgueil, 46,"' he went on, glancing at a card lying on the table. 'Something at the Bourse, I suppose. Anyhow, he deserves a lesson for his impertinence in taking my stall and refusing to give it up, and he shall have it. Eleven o'clock,' he added impatiently, after consulting his watch; 'Lemonnier and Collin ought to be back before this, and I should have been at the office an hour ago!'

Here his soliloquy was interrupted by a sharp ring at the entrance-door, which M. Fitzeliez hastened to open, and admitted the gentlemen in question.

'Well?' said he interrogatively,

as they entered his diminutive sitting-room; 'when is it for—tomorrow?'

'Ah, *ouiche*!' replied M. Lemonnier, the elder of the two, in a tone of extreme disgust, depositing, as he spoke, his hat on the table and himself in an arm-chair; 'that shows how little you know what sort of a customer we have had to deal with. He demands a week's delay.'

'On what grounds?'

'Simply because the insulted party, having naturally the choice of weapons, and the blow you own to have received in the scuffle giving you a perfect right to choose swords, he pretends that the chances are not equal, and that he, who never handled a foil since he was born, can't be expected to stand up as an animated target against one of the best fencers in Paris.'

'Who ever heard of such an absurdity!' angrily exclaimed Fitzeliez. 'You surely haven't consented?'

'What could we do?' interposed Collin. 'He won't fight without it, and, under the circumstances, we thought it better to let him have his own way. Half a dozen lessons won't teach him much.'

'A nice mess you've made of it!' growled Anatole. 'If it once gets about that I am concerned in a duel, I shall be ruined. They won't stand that sort of thing at the office, and my father-in-law *in spe* has a pious horror of what he calls "*des spadassins*." We might have got it quietly over, and no one would be a bit the

wiser; but the fellow is certain to blab before the time comes. However, there's no help for it now. When is it to be?

'This day week,' said Lemonnier. 'To-day is the 24th; so that brings it to the 31st; and we can settle the time and place by and by. Meanwhile, in case of accidents, you may as well keep your hand in.'

'I intend to,' grimly replied Fitzelzier; and his seconds shortly after departed, leaving their principal to his meditations.

That these were none of the pleasantest is not surprising; and the more he reflected on the possible result of the preceding evening's adventure, the less he liked it. If the affair got wind, he risked not only the probability of dismissal by his chief, but also the certainty of incurring the displeasure of M. Champfort, whose good opinion at this particular juncture it was more than ever important to secure. True, the banker of the Rue de Provence had of late appeared more propitiously inclined towards him, and had even, if not openly encouraged, at least tolerated his attachment to the charming Léonie; but that he was solely indebted for this indulgent reception to the old friendship existing between M. Champfort and his uncle Dugard—both natives of Soissons, in which town the latter still resided—Anatole knew perfectly well; and suspected, not without cause, that his presumptive heirship to his relative's very considerable fortune far outweighed in the eyes of the financier any personal merits of his own. As for Mdlle. Léonie herself, the few opportunities as yet allowed him of ascertaining the state of her feelings satisfied him that her affections were not engaged elsewhere, and that his attentions

were evidently not disagreeable to her, which, on the part of a young lady brought up in accordance with the strictly conventional method peculiar to France, was as much as could reasonably be expected. No obstacle, therefore, on her side was to be apprehended, in the event of her father's consent to their union being obtained; and this, as well as the approval of M. Dugard (whose views respecting duelling entirely coincided with those of his fellow-townsmen), could only be insured by both being left wholly in the dark with reference to the projected encounter. 'I can answer for Lemonnier and Collin,' thought Anatole; 'so all depends on the discretion of my adversary and his seconds. If the *Figaro* or the *Gaulois* get an inkling of the matter, I'm done for!'

What was M. Bonnivert doing in the mean time? A glance at his anxious and careworn face, as he laid down his knife and fork after a fruitless attempt to conjure up an appetite for the *sole à la Colbert*, and other indispensable adjuncts to a Parisian midday meal, at the Restaurant Champeaux half an hour before the opening of the Bourse, may possibly enlighten us. Facing him on the opposite side of the table sat his inseparable ally Poizard, who, having discharged his duty as *témoin*, was engaged in bisecting a *filet aux pommes* with great apparent relish, only pausing now and then to address a few disjointed words to his companion, who had taken a note-book from his pocket, and was busily occupied in jotting down certain cabalistic figures therein.

'I'll tell you what it is, Poizard,' observed the latter, after a final survey of his calculations, 'things are beginning to look serious. Who would have supposed the

funds would have shot up at such a pace as they did yesterday? If they keep as high as they are now for another week, there will be more than one long face in the parquet on settling-day.'

'Including yours, I'm afraid,' replied Poizard, tossing off a bumper of Macon. 'You've gone in rather heavily for the fall.'

'You needn't harp on that,' grumbled his friend testily; 'I shall get out of it all right, I dare say. Then, as if that wasn't enough, there's the other affair to be attended to. Most unlucky it should happen just now, when I have so much on my hands that I hardly know which way to turn. However, I've made an appointment with Gâtechair for this evening; he says that, with a week's practice, I ought to be able to hold my own against anybody.'

'He'll have to teach you all he knows, then,' doubtfully remarked Poizard; 'for they tell me that Fitzelier is Grisier's best pupil. *Sac-à-papier!*' he added, glancing at the clock, 'five minutes to one! If you have any orders to give before the Bourse opens, we haven't a moment to spare. *Garçon, l'addition!*

'*V'là, m'sieu.*'

During the next three or four days nothing occurred to justify Anatole's apprehensions. While his intended adversary was presumably absorbed by the twofold occupation of watching the financial market and profiting by the lessons of M. Gâtechair, he himself had been surprised by the unexpected arrival from Soissons of his uncle Dugard, who had established his temporary quarters at the Hôtel Chatham. The motive of the old gentleman's visit to Paris was the hope of bringing to a satisfactory issue the union

between his nephew and Mlle. Léonie; and in this, after a long conversation with the banker, he so far succeeded that, in consideration of Fitzelier's being duly acknowledged as his heir, the latter was formally authorised to pay his addresses to the young lady, and, preceded by the traditional bouquet, to enjoy the privilege of a daily interview with his *fiancée*—Madame Champfort, of course, playing propriety on the occasion. So that, what with the assiduous prosecution of his courtship, the duties of his office—which he naturally contemplated abandoning as soon as he conveniently could—and now and then a stolen half hour's practice with M. Grisier, his time was too fully employed to admit of his giving more than a transient thought to unpleasant contingencies, which, after all, might never arise, and, even if they did, might still, he confidently anticipated, be successfully 'tided over.'

The fifth day, however, was destined to bring with it a disagreeable reminder of the impending sword of Damocles, in the shape of the following mysteriously-worded *entre-filet* in an evening paper: 'It is rumoured that a hostile meeting will shortly take place between a gentleman connected with one of our public offices and a well-known *habitué* of the Bourse; the cause of quarrel, if we are correctly informed, being an altercation in a popular and fashionable theatre a few nights ago.' This paragraph, read aloud among other items of news by the banker for the amusement of his family circle, including M. Dugard and his nephew, so horrified the latter that he had great difficulty in keeping his countenance and listening with assumed interest to the unflattering remarks bestowed

on the intending belligerents by the seniors of the party. While M. Champfort eloquently expatiated on the folly of duelling, and denounced the culpable indifference of the authorities to so reprehensible a practice, Anatole was vainly endeavouring to divine who could possibly be the writer of the article, and, as usual in such cases, suspected everybody but the real Simon Pure. How the secret oozed out may be told in few words. The colleague of M. Poizard, by name Tourillon, over-elated at the prospect of officiating as 'second' for the first time in his life, had imprudently boasted of it in a moment of expansion to one of those literary jackals always on the lookout for a sensational bit of scandal, without, however, carrying his indiscretion so far as actually to name the principals concerned. Hence the comparative vagueness of the information imparted by the journalist, which nevertheless appeared sufficiently explicit to Fitzelier to warrant his belief that the author of the *on dit* could have spoken more plainly had he chosen to do so, and to impress him with the uncomfortable conviction that the next number of the paper would infallibly supply the details still wanting to render his identification complete.

How he passed the ensuing twenty-four hours he hardly knew; his head was in a perpetual whirl of excitement, and it is doubtful whether on that day the administration of the *Cour des Comptes* derived much benefit from their supernumerary's labours.

On his return home a note from Lemonnier informed him that the 'affair' was fixed to come off early on the following morning in the wood of Vincennes,

as being more secure from interruption than the Bois de Boulogne, and that he and Collin would call for him as previously arranged. He had been invited to dine that evening in the Rue de Provence, and, although he strove to appear at his ease and take part in the conversation, was so manifestly out of spirits that not even the attractions of Mlle. Léonie, nor the unwonted gaiety of her father, who seemed in high good-humour, owing to the continued rise of the funds, could succeed in diverting his thoughts from the one subject that exclusively preoccupied him. To his great relief, however, a glance through the columns of *La Patrie* satisfied him as to the absence of any further allusion to the coming event; there was, therefore, still a chance that the publicity he so much dreaded might even then be avoided, or at least deferred until he could devise some means of successfully weathering the storm. As he slowly regained his solitary apartment, after accompanying his uncle to the hotel, his reflections became a trifle more cheerful; he had sufficient confidence in his own skill as a swordsman to be aware that, barring accidents, he was more than a match for his inexperienced antagonist, and could consequently put an end to the combat whenever he chose, either by the simple process of disarming his opponent, or by inflicting on him the slightest possible wound that would serve as an excuse for the legitimate interference of the seconds. 'I bear the fellow no malice,' he said to himself, as he prepared to indulge in a few hours of necessary repose; 'and, if truth were told, I wouldn't mind wagering that, though the last week hasn't turned out a particularly pleasant

one for me, it has been worse for him !'

Like most young Frenchmen of his class, Anatole was not, as a rule, an early riser; but, on the present occasion, he was awake long before dawn, and ready for the fray. Punctual as clockwork, he heard the steps of his friends ascending the stairs, guided towards the half-open door by the light of a lamp placed in the passage outside.

'Are we in time?' he asked, as they appeared within hail.

'Time to go to bed again,' replied Lemonnier, entering briskly, while the more sedate Collin leisurely brought up the rear, 'if you have a fancy that way. You're not wanted for anything else; he has bolted !'

'Who has bolted?' inquired the puzzled Anatole.

'Bonnivet, of course ! Look here;' and drawing from his pocket a pencilled note, he handed it to his principal, who ran his eye over the subjoined laconic missive:

'Inutile de vous déranger. Bonnivet a filé.'

'What can this mean?' he said.

'All I know is this,' answered Lemonnier. 'When Collin came to fetch me ten minutes ago, it had just been left with my porter, who had orders to let me have it immediately. One thing is clear enough: the fellow has shown us a clean pair of heels, and we needn't trouble ourselves

further. So let us have some coffee and a cigar, and we can talk it over.'

An hour later, while the trio were still engaged in the consumption of the solacing weed, a modest knock at the door was followed by the entrance of the *concierge* with a letter, bearing the post-mark of the preceding evening, which Fitzelier, after glancing at its contents, proceeded to read aloud, for the benefit of his companions. It ran thus:

'Monsieur,—L'homme propose, et la Bourse dispose. Circumstances of an imperative nature compelling me to absent myself from Paris, it will be impossible for me, much to my regret, to have the honour of keeping my appointment with you to-morrow. I have, therefore, no alternative but to request you to accept my excuses. JULES BONNIVET.'

'Poor devil !' said Lemonnier; 'he has been hit hard this month—over two hundred thousand francs, I heard yesterday, and not a chance of any one ever seeing a sou of them !'

'Then there will be no duel after all,' sighed Collin, who, civilian as he was, professed, like the late Monsieur de Vidil, to be *friand de la lame*.'

'Luckily for Anatole,' remarked his colleague. 'You have had a narrow escape, *mon bon*.'

'*Tout est bien qui finit bien*,' was M. Fitzelier's reply.

CHARLES HERVEY.

THE LAST OF THE FRENCH MONKS.

WHEN the French Republic issued the edict for the expulsion of the religious orders, the brotherhood of the Grande Chartreuse was exempted from the general ban, on the plea that it is a commercial as well as a religious community. Although it is stated in the Continental *Bradshaw* that the monks have been driven forth from their ancient abode, and that the convent is now deserted, having positive information to the contrary, we started from Lyons one bleak March morning at early dawn on a visit to these famous recluses. The great city lies sleeping under a pall of sombre cloud, not innocent of smoke, as we steam out into the flat dreary suburbs that lie on its southern side. After the first few miles, the light in the east gradually changes, by 'heavenly alchemy,' from lead to gold, and the rising sun darts its streamers through the undulating vapours that still hang over the Lyonnais mountains in the extreme distance; and as we advance farther into lovely Dauphiné the scene grows more and more picturesque. There is the quaint old town of La Tour du Pin, perched on its rocky eminence, overlooking a rich valley of cornland and vineyard; and soon we obtain glimpses of the distant Alps. At Chabons we are 510 mètres—about 1660 feet—above the level of the sea; and here the landscape displays every element of beauty and grandeur. To the north-east a vast plain, divided and intersected by rows of tall trees, the remotest points clearly distinguishable in the pellucid

atmosphere; beneath the railroad, which winds along the side of a precipitous hill, vine and orchard clad slopes that descend into undulating valleys hundreds of feet beneath, swelling on the opposite side into wooded heights that fold over each other, and sink into umbrageous gorges, crowned sometimes with an ancient château; while in the far background the great mountains tower aloft like masses of black and white clouds suspended upon the horizon.

We quit the train at Voiron—that being the nearest point on the line to our destination—and hire a conveyance for the rest of the journey. Behind a couple of good little horses, with jingling bells on their collars, we quickly clear the town. There is nothing much to interest the traveller in Voiron; it has few antiquities, and few, if any, historical reminiscences connected with it; but as we ascend a long steep hill, its cluster of houses, in which dwell some sixteen thousand people, nestling close together in the great plain, under the shadow of the snow-capped mountains that half encircle it, looks exceedingly picturesque. Through the glowing yet keen air we make our way past a straggling village, and down the other side of the hill, until we enter a grim-looking gorge, enclosed by tall perpendicular rocks. After winding among these for a time, we are again out in the open, traversing a level road that runs beneath wooded heights thickly covered with firs and pines, while on the left is a stretch of flat meadowland dotted

with houses, and enclosed by another range of slopes.

Our spirited little horses dash along at a rare pace through the village of St. Laurent-du-Pont, the one street of which is filled with chaffering peasants—for it is market-day—until a sudden turn in the road brings us to the entrance of “Le Désert,” as it is called, and we find ourselves at the foot of an Alpine pass, and on the banks of a swift stream that comes foaming and tumbling and raging through a rocky channel, over great boulders and trunks and branches of trees; a little higher, where a bridge crosses, there is a fall of some dozen to twenty feet that roars beneath the little stone arch, and swirls and eddies with a fury that threatens the foundations. On the right winds the narrow path we have to pursue, over which hang bare impending rocks rising hundreds of feet into the blue profound; while on the opposite bank of the torrent the mountain-side is covered with tree rising above tree, both evergreen and deciduous, and with masses of fern and moss and all kinds of vegetation that leave no spot of earth bare. Close by, nestling beneath a precipice, is the ancient *four-voirie* of the convent, originally built to accommodate the horses, vehicles, and retinue of the great personages who made pilgrimages to the Chartreuse, and also used as a storehouse for provisions and other requisites, which were conveyed thence to the monastery on the backs of mules, as required. This is now the distillery in which the liqueur that renders the name of the Grande Chartreuse familiar to millions who would never otherwise hear of it is made, the process being superintended by some of the lay brethren. Higher up are the ancient forges and

foundries, all connected with the monks, and dating back to the thirteenth century, where the ore found in the mountains is melted and manufactured.

After passing these, we have done with the habitations of man, and are alone with Nature in her grandest and yet loveliest mood. The aspect of the scene will very differently impress the traveller under different atmospheric influences. Beneath a blue sunlit sky the sense of the awful becomes merged in the beautiful, but in the gloom of a coming storm it must be terribly sublime; then the moss-covered rocks, now gilded by the sunlight, the shadowy and fairy-like nooks, and the bright green trees will wear a sombre look; the deep valley, down which we glance from one of the bridges that span its precipitous sides over the tops of giant pines, through delicate traceries of quivering leaves and teeming vegetation that hide the streams rushing on hundreds of feet below, will be a gloomy and fathomless gulf, obscured by vapours, through which will be heard the muffled roar of the invisible waters; while the snow-covered heights on the opposite side, that seem to have been carved by Titans into the semblance of fretted and pillared turrets, will loom grim and ghastly through rolling mists.

After a while we leave spring behind, and enter the regions of an almost perpetual winter. The ground is now glassy with ice, half melted by the rays of the sun; snow flecks the hardy mosses, clings to the trees, encrusts the bare rocks, and the air is piercingly cold. Suddenly we emerge from the narrow pass into a wide clearing of still-rising ground, an amphitheatre of pine-covered hills and huge mountains, snow-clad

from summit to base, in the centre of which is a large gray building with conical turrets; this is the Grande Chartreuse. A stillness so intense, a calm so profound, can only be realised by those who have known such mountain solitudes. The woods are voiceless; not a leaf stirs; the dark-green trees seem but petrifications; only the jingling bells of our horses agitate the soundless air. Nature, wrapped in her frozen robes of white and green, is dumb, lifeless, awful, brooding Sphinx-like over her own eternal mysteries.

Leaving our driver and his conveyance at a gateway which leads to the offices and stables, we pursue our way on foot up a steep ascent slippery with ice, and, turning a corner, find ourselves at the principal entrance. Opposite to this, but some little distance off, is another building; this, during the summer months, is inhabited by a religious sisterhood from the neighbourhood of Grenoble, and affords hospitality to such ladies as visit the locality. Pulling the iron bell-handle that hangs beside the great gate, our summons is answered by a monk in a brown frock, who, bowing low, but asking no question—for it is open house to all travellers—conducts us into a courtyard or quadrangle enclosed by high sombre walls pierced by two stories of deep-set stone-framed windows. Following him across the white muffled stones, we pass beneath an archway, through a small room, and thence into the refectory. The latter is a spacious, oblong, low-ceiled apartment, with a row of windows on one side. The walls are ornamented with pictures of the locality, and others upon religious subjects; the floor is sanded; and there are several bare wooden tables laid with knives, forks, wooden spoons, and

glasses, and scattered about is a number of wooden chairs. The room is heated by a large stove in the centre. Here we are heartily welcomed by a genial rubicund-faced brother, who seems to be the clerk of the kitchen. The first thing to be done is to celebrate the rites of hospitality. He will hear nothing until we have dined; and, as a great many hours have elapsed since we broke our fast, we are by no means loth to go through that ceremony. A very pleasant bright young fellow, in secular costume of trousers, waistcoat, and shirt-sleeves, is ordered to wait upon us. As an appetiser, he begins by presenting us with a glass of the famous liqueur, the delicious and soothing flavour of which we find very grateful and exhilarating. Enough food is then spread upon the bare table to satisfy three or four starving navvies—a large basin of pottage or stew, composed of bread and vegetables; a dish of peculiar-looking meat, which, finding it neither inviting to the eye or nose, we eschew; a giant omelette beautifully cooked; a large piece of Gruyère cheese, abundance of sweet butter, a huge loaf, a bowl of salad; a dessert of apples, figs, and dried plums; and a large bottle of good rough wine. While we are discussing these substantial dishes, several people pass in and out—a bulbous-nosed curé from Grenoble, two or three farmers of the neighbourhood, several *frères* of the convent—all of whom chat together with a cheerfulness not at all suggestive of asceticism.

But just as we have finished our meal there enters a spare figure clad in the white woollen dress of a *père*. The colourless face pitted with smallpox, the hollow cheeks, sunken eyes, and bloodless lips bear witness to

rigid fasts and mortification of the flesh; the ball of one eye has been pierced, and is sightless; and this accident gives an aspect almost of repulsiveness to the face. He is unmistakably a man of breeding, and there is something in his air which impresses one with the belief that he is a man with a story as well. We afterwards learned that he had been a general in the Russian army, and had lost his sight in the Crimean War. As he speaks English fluently, he has, in compliment to us, been summoned from his cell to be our cicerone. Having exchanged greetings, we follow him along a dimly-lit stone passage into the great cloister. This is one of the wonders of the convent, being about seven hundred feet in length, which is longer than that of St. Peter's at Rome, and it is lighted by one hundred and thirteen windows. Looking from end to end, the further extremity seems scarcely lofty enough for a child to pass beneath its round arch; some portions are as old as the thirteenth and fourteenth century. Another cloister of the same length runs parallel with this, but is much more modern.

Seven different buildings have occupied the site previous to the erection of the present one in 1686. The earliest dated back to the eleventh century, and was raised by the founder of the order, St. Bruno. This famous Catholic saint, a man of splendid talents, had risen to a high ecclesiastical dignity in the Bishopric of Rheims, when one day, so runs the legend, as he and two friends were discoursing together upon the false pleasures and perishable riches of earth and the delights of the eternal glory, possessed by a sudden ecstasy, they vowed to renounce the world,

seek some solitude free from the haunts of man, and give up their lives wholly to the worship of God. Several years elapsed, however, before they could put these resolves into execution; then, after many wanderings, they at length settled down in the then almost inaccessible desert of the Chartreuse.* In that age of religious fervour, many were eager to follow and to emulate their example; the fame of a brotherhood that in austerity far outdid all others spread throughout the Catholic world; and many years did not elapse before similar convents were established all over Europe, England included.

In the course of the many centuries that have elapsed since St. Bruno set up his 'everlasting rest' in these wild solitudes, the Chartreusians have experienced many vicissitudes by fire and sword and revolution. In 1132, soon after the death of its founder, the first monastery was destroyed by an avalanche, beneath which seven of the twelve monks who then inhabited it were buried. The chapel of St. Bruno, which still stands upon the original spot, though it has been frequently restored, was alone spared. Another convent was immediately built upon the site of the old one. Among the recluses who resided in this was our own Hugh of Lincoln; and tradition still points to a cell in the grand cloister, which, it is supposed, he once inhabited. In 1317 this second building, through the carelessness of the servants of a grand seigneur, took fire, and, being chiefly of wood, was soon reduced to ashes. The cells and the principal portions of the third building were constructed of stone; but in 1371 it was destroyed by a similar

* So called from the village of St. Pierre de Chartreuse.

catastrophe. This time subscriptions for its reërection poured in from all the sovereigns of Europe, while Chartreusians were despatched to England, France, Germany, and Italy to collect contributions. In 1473 this third building became a prey to the flames. In 1562 the Baron des Ardrets, having joined the Huguenots, marched upon the Grande Chartreuse, and pillaged and burned it. Fortunately, the monks had received warning of this advance in time to fly, carrying with them a few treasures; but priceless mss., valuable books, the archives of the monastery, and all the furniture were cast into the flames by the ruthless soldiery. Again the convent was reconstructed; and a fourth time, in 1592, it fell beneath its old enemy. The sixth building lasted eighty-four years, when it was overtaken by the same fatality that had attended its five predecessors. This was the last of the fires; the seventh building, which, as we have before stated, dates back to 1686, still stands. But, during the great Revolution, the Chartreusians suffered in common with the other religious orders of France; they were driven from their cells, many thrown into prison, the building was sacked and defiled by the *sans culottes*, and everything belonging thereto stolen or destroyed. It was not until 1816 that the monks were permitted to return to their old home. From that time they have pursued the even tenor of their lives; but the general feeling of insecurity which pervades every class of the nation is equally felt here, for any day they may receive a notification that the privilege has been rescinded, and that they must go forth from their ancient home.

Opening upon the cloisters are

thirty-six low-browed doors, each marked with a letter of the alphabet; these are the entrances to the compartments allotted to each recluse. All are constructed according to the same plan. Upon the ground-floor is a cell divided into two divisions: the first half is filled with blocks of wood, which the inhabitant has to chop for his use; the second half, in the one we saw, was a tiny carpenter's shop, with a lathe, where the father might at times amuse himself. Beyond is a little garden, closed in by high walls—it was several feet deep in snow when we were there—in which he may breathe the fresh air. Mounting a short flight of stairs, we find ourselves in a cell which is divided into an oratory, a sitting-room, and a bed-chamber; a crucifix, an altar, one chair, a few books and pictures, a kind of cupboard bed, stuffed with straw and covered with coarse rugs, a wooden spoon and fork, and a little salt, and you have the entire contents. When the recluse requires food he drops a note, with the letter of his cell, into the little grating that opens beside each door, and there, a short time afterwards, he will find what he has demanded. Between this utter solitude, where no sounds, save those of the elements, can penetrate, and the scarcely less lonely chapel, the Chartreusian passes his existence, in almost perpetual silence. If two fathers meet, they bow, but exchange no word.

My conductor considered their rule to be more severe than even that of La Trappe, in which, although under the obligation of silence, the monks are permitted to work together, while that of the Chartreuse denies even silent companionship. On Sundays the fathers are permitted to

dine together in their refectory, a Gothic apartment with an arched wooden roof and two tables, which extend from end to end on either side; while they eat, one reads or chants, but no conversation is permitted.

The Chartreusian day commences at six A.M.; from that hour until ten he is engaged in various devotional exercises; between ten and eleven he takes the first of his two daily meals. His diet is of the most meagre; neither meat nor wine ever forms any part of it. When one of the Popes desired to relax their rule in favour of the sick, the whole community rebelled against the proposition, which had, in consequence, to be abandoned, and has never since been revived. After breakfast, and until half-past two, the father occupies himself in work or recreation of some kind, cutting wood for his stove, working in his tiny garden, moulding a figure of a saint, or in reading. At a quarter to three he goes to vespers; this office lasts one hour and a half, after which he sups; at five he is summoned to comply; five hours afterwards the first matin bell is sounded; between this and the second bell there is an interval of one hour, which is called the watches. This is employed in reciting the offices of the holy Virgin, praying for the delivery of the Holy Places—a remnant of the Crusade times, in which the order was first founded—and to mental orisons. When the bell again sounds all quit their cells, and once more repair to the church.

The church is divided into two parts—the first, which is called the *sanctuaire*, or altar, is set apart for the *pères*, to each of which is assigned a separate stall—for they must even pray alone; all behind the altar is for the

frères. The liturgy is of great antiquity, going back to the early days of the Eastern Church, and chiefly consists of a low, long, unaccompanied, monotonous chant. For the midnight office pulpits are raised, upon each of which is placed an enormous folio *antiphonaire*; above this is a taper enclosed in a lantern, that sheds a light upon the book, but leaves all around it in shadow; at certain parts of the ritual the lights are extinguished.

Standing upon 'the tribune,' a small gallery, the only part of the sacred edifice upon which the secular foot is permitted to tread, we conjured up a picture of the weird solemnity of this midnight Mass. We could see the patches of soft light cast upon the open books, and through the deep shadows altar, and columns, and roof, and stalls loomed dimly as in a mist, until they faded into gulf-like darkness. How awful is this stillness, until the deep notes of the vesper bell throb through the lifeless air! A moment more, and there is a distant sound of footsteps, that grows and grows, and draws nearer and nearer; invisible beings people the black profound behind the altar, and muffled figures, in spectral white, move across the shadows of the foreground, glide into dim circles, and, falling upon their knees, become motionless, as though carved in stone. Was it a procession of ghosts, or have the carved effigies descended from their pedestals? Again there is a deep hush, upon which, in another moment, rises that strange solemn chant, swelling and falling, reverberating against the vaulted roof, passing beyond the walls, and echoing like spirit voices among the black woods and the white mountains, mingling, maybe, with the roar of the wind, the dash of the rain,

and the roll of the thunder. Suddenly all is darkness, and out of the abyss those deep wailing supplications float like the cries of disembodied souls.

This office lasts from two to three hours. It is about two o'clock when the monks reënter their cells; where, before seeking their hard beds, they recite certain prayers. This leaves them but little time for sleep before the matin bell rings at five or six to again summon them to worship.

From the church we passed on to the library: a fine Gothic apartment containing about six thousand volumes, but all collected during the present century, the ancient books and mss. having been destroyed, as we have before intimated, in the many fires, and above all by the revolutionists. Although mainly consisting of theological works, such classics as Plato, Seneca, Aristotle are represented upon its shelves. The monks are permitted the use of the books, but only in their own cells; no one reads in the library.

After viewing the chapter-house—a lofty apartment decorated with a copy of Lesueur's famous series of pictures delineating the life of St. Bruno, the originals of which are in the Louvre—we again descended to the cloisters, and our guide led the way to the last scene of all, the cemetery. It occupies but a small space of ground, and is covered with wooden crosses, with here and there a few of stone to mark the graves of the superiors. No coffin encloses the wasted remains of the Chartreusians; they are simply laid upon a bier and consigned to their Mother Earth. No more melancholy and desolate spot could be conceived than this snow-covered patch of ground enclosed between four high walls. Of the average age of these monks we

could obtain no information; but some curious instances of longevity have occurred among them, though these chiefly belong to the Middle Ages. In 1835 one was said to have attained his hundredth year, after having been an inmate of the monastery seventy-nine years.

It is necessary that the obligations of so rigorous an order should be taken only after long deliberation, and a full understanding of their meaning; so there is a preparatory probation of twelve months before the candidate is admitted even to the novitiate; and it is only after another four years that the solemn profession, which renders his vow irrevocable, can be made.

The costume of the Chartreusian resembles in form the *tunica talaris* of the Romans, while the material of which it is made is much the same as that worn by the peasants of Savoy when St. Bruno first settled among them. It consists of a long robe of white woollen, confined at the waist by a black leathern belt, from which depends a large chaplet. Above this tunic is the scapulary, which is joined together a little below the arms by a band; a cowl, the ancient headdress of the Gauls, completes the dress. The *frères* superintend the mundane affairs of the convent, receive the guests, and transact whatever business there may be with the outward world; consequently, the rules under which they live are not nearly so rigorous; and any time during the first eleven years of his profession any one of them is at liberty to withdraw. The dress resembles that of the *pères*, save that it is brown instead of white, and the *frère* wears a beard, while the others are closely shaven. The head of the convent, the Reverend *Père*, is elected by the monks only over whom he is to

preside. Previous to the election the Chartreusians fast for three days, and pray to God to direct them in their choice. The election is superintended by two priors from other monasteries, who examine the votes, which, unsigned, are deposited in an urn, and declare the election. The Reverend *Père* takes the title of prior, and is in no way distinguished in costume or otherwise from the rest of the fathers; his stall in the church is no different; in the refectory he has a separate table, but he is served with the same viands and upon the same wooden platters; and should princes and prelates sit at his table, they would be served in the same simple fashion, as the convent has neither silver nor porcelain nor fine linen. Nevertheless, the most profound reverence is paid to the superior; the monks never pass him without a respectful salutation; and when they approach to address him they kiss the hem of his scapulary. His power within the convent is absolute, and there is no appeal against his decrees. Under the prior is the *Père Procureur*, who directs the temporal affairs, and, assisted by subordinate officers, superintends all the commercial transactions connected with the sale of the liqueur. It was a strange sight to see this white-robed tonsured figure seated in a little room fitted up like a modern office, with desk and pigeon-holes, and account-books and little files, and all the paraphernalia of the counting-house. It was the one jarring element in the whole building.

Political economists, who would reduce all human life to a book of arithmetic, revolutionists and iconoclasts, pioneers of the new barbarism which threaten to overwhelm all intellectual civilisation

as utterly as ever did the Goths and the Huns, may advocate the suppression of all such societies as that of the Grande Chartreuse; but surely in this over-busy world—in which, to use the phrase of the political economists themselves, the production has become so far in excess of the demand—there is room for a few score *solitaires* to waste their lives in. If they do no good from a matter-of-fact point of view, they do no harm, and they represent a phase of old-world life that we should be loth to lose altogether. Hopelessly unimaginative and commonplace must be the man who can visit the Chartreuse without being impressed by what he has seen, quite apart from the magnificent scenery and surroundings. For a time he has gone back centuries, and lived in the Middle Ages, amidst customs, costumes, and people who, while the world has been in perpetual change, have remained as immutable as the mountains and the forests among which they exist. And these are not the typical lazy and luxurious monks whose tyranny and vices brought about the Reformation; they may in their secret hearts be gross, petty, narrow-minded creatures—mere living formulas, mechanical worshippers, the very antipodes of the lofty ideal they aim at; but these men—most of whom, it must be remembered, have been reared in luxury—by their own free choice, live a life of privation, cut off from every solace that renders existence not only pleasant, but endurable—a life that the poorest wretch in our great towns would shrink from. If there be merit in subjugating the passions and appetites of the body—and such has been recognised by all creeds and all philosophers in all ages—surely some honour is due to these ascetics.

Again, there should plead for them the old spirit of hospitality; and how many boasted modern reforms might be advantageously exchanged for a revival of *that*! There is something infinitely pleasant in that warm eager greeting with which you, an entire stranger, will be received within those walls—the plentiful board which is not tarified, the neat chamber which is placed at your disposal at not so much a night. Truly, you are expected to make a donation on leaving the convent; but the amount is left to your generosity and your means, and there is something pleasant in such voluntary payments.

The light of the declining sun was transforming the great mountain to a mass of molten silver, though twilight had already fallen upon the pine woods opposite,

when we again mounted our car. On our way down into the darkening valley we occasionally met groups of peasants toiling up the steep ascent, returning home from market, leading a cow or a horse, and laden with bundles and purchases. Solemn and awe-inspiring looked the fantastic rocks, the deep precipices, and shadowy abysses in the closing light; and by the time we reached the founderies and *fourvoiries*, the dove's twilight had darkened into the raven's. The trees were lost in gloom, the beetling crags were black and formless, and the foaming torrent above gleamed with startling distinctness out of its dim surroundings. A few minutes more, and we were out of 'the Desert,' in the open, beneath the dark-blue starlit sky, on our way back to Voiron.

H. BARTON BAKER.

ALONE.

A LONELY violet in a wilderness,
That yearns to spread its fragrant loveliness,
And charm rank weeds to tender sympathy,
But panting dies unheard in one long sigh.

A lingering longing spark in some dead fire,
That burns its heart to rouse the lifeless ashes;
A teardrop quivering on cruel lashes,
One tender chord upon a broken lyre.

A ray of sunlight on a storm-filled day,
That woos the sullen clouds with soft warm kisses;
A human soul, that soars alone too high,
Seeking yet finding not the love it misses.

W. T. LOCKE.

THREE WIZARDS AND A WITCH.

BY MRS. J. H. RIDDELL, AUTHOR OF 'THE SENIOR PARTNER,'
'GEORGE GEITH OF FEN COURT,' ETC.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

ANYTHING BUT PLEASANT.

FROM the time settlements were first mentioned, his most partial friend could not have described Mr. Sudlow as an ardent suitor.

He had tried every means of avoiding making any; and when he found Sir Geoffrey what the Baronet described as 'stiff,' he began seriously to reconsider the whole question of marriage.

He had learned that money makes any man of value in the matrimonial market, and it occurred to him that he might do a good deal better than Miss Chelston. He might not get a more beautiful wife; but there was no reason why he should not secure one even better born and moving in the best circles. Mr. Sudlow's only weakness chanced to be a craze for good society; and he had not long possessed the privilege of Sir Geoffrey Chelston's friendship before he clearly understood whatever the rank of that gentleman's acquaintances might be, his daughter did not visit at grand houses or receive visits from ladies whose names were ever likely to figure in the *Court Journal*.

Not all the Baronet's finessing and talk about great people could deceive him on this point. For a short time he suffered himself to be deluded into the belief that his adored one could introduce him to those charmed circles where fashion holds high carni-

val, but this idea was soon dispelled.

As regarded Mr. Gayre also, Sir Geoffrey's notion was right. The banker had ceased to be a hero to his former admirer. There are some persons it is unsafe to admit to a private view of dignity in dressing-gown and slippers; and North Bank and The Warren exactly represented this sort of attire to Mr. Sudlow's artless inexperience. To quote his own mental phrase, he didn't 'think much' of the Chelston or Gayre set. He had never met, and he was never likely to meet, the Canon; and if he had, even that respectable clergyman would scarcely, to his mind, have represented a court card. Sir Geoffrey certainly did know some persons of title; but then, as a rule, they were black sheep, and, whether black or white, took no pains to conceal that they meant to have nothing whatever to do with Mr. Sudlow. He was far too careful and model a young man to find favour in their eyes. He looked many times at a sovereign before changing it; he would not bet, he did not drink, he knew nothing about horses, he was not amusing, or good-natured, or useful; he bored even Miss Chelston to death, and she certainly was not a peculiarly lively person.

Altogether, Mr. Sudlow felt greatly disappointed with the result of the first love-affair he had adventured upon that could, with

any propriety, be spoken about, and he steadfastly purposed, if possible, to make those settlements a cause for breaking off the match. It was ridiculous to expect him to marry a girl who had not a shilling or a settled social position; who, in spite of being a Baronet's daughter, was in reality more thoroughly a nobody than himself. If Mr. Gayre liked to give his niece a fortune, he would put down an equal amount. There was no reason why the banker should not do this, yet Mr. Sudlow scarcely felt brave enough to make the suggestion.

When he received a note, however, from Mr. Gayre, asking him to call in Lombard Street, he began to think matters might still take a favourable turn. He knew Miss Chelston was in Wimpole Street, but he did not know why; and under the circumstances it was natural enough he should imagine Mr. Gayre at last meant to 'act handsomely' by her.

Walking along the Strand to keep the appointment, he ran across a man he had met in North Bank. As a rule he passed Mr. Sudlow with a careless nod, but on this occasion he stopped, and with hands plunged deep in his pockets, and hat tilted back from his forehead, said,

'Heard if Chelston is out of danger?'

'I didn't know he was in any danger.'

'Didn't you really? Awful smash; mare bolted with him the very day after he went down into Yorkshire; he was picked up for dead, so Graceless tells me. Pity, too! never saw a finer horseman. Hope they'll save his leg,' and Mr. Helsey, who was waiting for a friend, leisurely took his cigar out of his mouth, and looked at it with a contemplative cast of countenance.

'I am very sorry,' remarked Mr. Sudlow.

'Sure you are. Not half a bad fellow, Chelston. No one's enemy but his own. That was a bit of a bother up at North Bank, wasn't it?'

'I have not heard—'

'Why, bless my soul, you know nothing, and I thought you were hand and glove there! Not but what Graceless said long ago he believed you meant to cry off. You are just as safe too, perhaps. Shouldn't care for Chelston for a father-in-law myself; and though the girl is quiet and demure enough, still where there has been anything with the mother I think it's risky work. *What!* you don't mean to tell me you never knew *that!* I wouldn't have spoken, only I made sure you knew all about it. I believe Lady Chelston was as little in fault as a woman ever can be when she goes off with somebody—not her husband. It was a hard blow for the Gayres; the old man never really held up his head after it. Ah! here comes Jennings. Hope Chelston will pull through all right. Ta-ta!'

Mr. Sudlow did not pursue his walk eastward. Instead, he despatched a curt note to Lombard Street saying he could not call, and giving no hint when it might suit his convenience to do so. The note reached Mr. Gayre before he left the City; he kept very different hours from what had formerly been his wont, and he decided to take Mr. Sudlow on his way home.

'I have come to have some talk with you, Sudlow,' he said, 'about my niece.'

'Yes, Mr. Gayre.'

'I consider matters are in a very unsatisfactory state between you, and as her father has left her in my charge I want to come

to a thorough understanding with you on the subject.'

'What is it you wish to know?'

'First, when the settlements are to be signed; next, when the marriage is to take place.'

Mr. Sudlow hesitated; he didn't like Mr. Gayre's tone, and he liked the look of Mr. Gayre's clenched hand laid firmly upon the table still less. There was very little of the banker about that hand, and there was a great deal too much of the cavalry officer. At that moment the old Adam was very strong in Mr. Gayre. He had a fierce desire to quarrel with somebody, and he felt he would rather quarrel with Mr. Sudlow than any other human being.

'I am waiting for your answer,' he said.

'You are very imperative,' Mr. Sudlow replied; 'what is the cause of all this sudden haste?'

'There is nothing sudden about the matter. The affair has been at a standstill for months. On one paltry pretence and another you have managed to put off the signing of these settlements from autumn to spring, and we are no further forward now than we were in the autumn.'

'That is true, and I fear we shall never get any further forward.'

'What the devil do you mean, sir?' asked Mr. Gayre.

'Just what I say. It is of no use trying to bully me, Mr. Gayre. I don't intend to sign those settlements, and I don't mean to marry your niece.'

Mr. Gayre sprang from his chair, and Mr. Sudlow sprang from his. Just for a moment they looked across the table at each other, then—

'Sit down, you coward,' said Mr. Gayre; 'I am not going to strike you. Now, tell me the

plain English of all this. What makes you say you will jilt the girl?'

'I was duped into proposing to her.'

'You were *what*?'

'I was misled.'

'Who misled you?'

'You must know I had every reason to suppose her father was a very different person from what I find him to be.'

'I know no such thing. From the very first, when you would insist on being introduced to my niece, I told you in so many words her father was a blackleg, a scoundrel, and a cheat. If you did not choose to believe me—if you would persist in thinking a baronet could not fail to be a paragon of virtue—the fault was yours, not mine. But you did not think anything of the sort; you have some other reason for wanting to back out of your engagement, and I insist on your telling me what it is.'

'I always objected to those settlements.'

'Why did you not then refuse to make any? When Sir Geoffrey said you should not have his daughter on any other terms, why did you not tell him fairly you declined to marry her? You have not acted straightforwardly, Mr. Sudlow; you have kept shilly-shallying about the affair till I am tired of hearing it named. But I intend to put matters on a different footing. It was competent for you once to withdraw your offer; but you shall not do so now. I mean you to marry her soon, or else know some excellent reason why you won't.'

'It is something outrageous to expect me to make such settlements on a girl utterly destitute of fortune.'

'It would be something out-

rageous if a girl possessed of any fortune were willing to marry you.'

'Now it is of no use taking that tone with me, Mr. Gayre; I won't stand it.'

'You'll have to stand it, and a good deal more before you have done with me,' retorted Mr. Gayre. 'And as we are upon the topic, I tell you fairly that if my niece had not been as selfish, calculating, and worldly as yourself, I should never have thought of letting her marry you. In most respects you will, however, be admirably matched.'

'We never shall be matched,' interrupted Mr. Sudlow.

'We'll see about that,' said Mr. Gayre.

'I should have married Miss Chelston long ago,' remarked Mr. Sudlow, 'if you would have made some suitable provision for her; but I am now quite determined to break off the affair entirely.'

'I know, then, what I shall do,' and Mr. Gayre took up his hat.

'I have been kept most shamefully in the dark. It was by the merest chance I heard there had even been a scandal about Lady Chelston—and—'

'O, that's it, is it?' and Mr. Gayre laid down his hat. 'You had better think twice about what you purpose doing, my friend. When this matter comes into court—as come into court it shall—it will be pleasant for you to hear counsel state that the individual who makes an old story about a woman who had such excuse as wife living never could urge before, whose husband never brought a charge against her, who condoned her error, who laid her amongst his own people, the pretext for refusing to marry her daughter, is the grandson of a felon, transported for life for robbery and attempted murder.'

'How dare you state such an infamous lie!'

'Lie is a nasty word; but we will let that pass. I always knew your grandfather had been a convict, but I did not know the full measure of his crimes till I came the other day upon all the papers connected with the affair. The public will find the story very exciting and entertaining reading. I have nothing more to say now, except that I shall be glad if you will remove your account tomorrow, and transfer your securities to the keeping of some other banker. You objected to employing any solicitor over those settlements; I should advise you to look out for some sharp lawyer now, for you will require one before you have done with me. Good-evening.'

As he walked up Wimpole Street, Mr. Gayre felt conscious that he was extremely tired, and needed a long night's sound rest; but the day's work was not yet over. He had scarcely sat down to dinner before Rawlings announced that Mr. Colvend wished to see him particularly.

'He will wait, Colonel,' said the man. 'He said you were on no account to disturb yourself.'

When Mr. Gayre entered his library he found the poor old man sitting in a listless attitude, with head drooped and hands clasped together between his knees.

'You must forgive me for coming so late,' he began; 'but—' and there he stopped. Twice he tried to finish his sentence, and failed, and then fairly giving way, he covered his face, and cried like a child.

'What is the matter? What has happened?' asked Mr. Gayre.

'It is my daughter, my poor Dossie. She has had brain fever; she has been dreadfully ill,' moaned Mr. Colvend, in a series of gasp-

ing sobs. "But that is not the worst of it. O Mr. Gayre, have pity upon me! I am afraid what that scoundrel Fife said was too true. There is no doubt she was fond of Dane, and that the trouble unsettled her reason. My unfortunate girl! my dear, dear little Dossie!"

"I am very sorry indeed for you," and Mr. Gayre did feel most truly sorry for the wretched father.

"Yes, it is an awful business," went on Mr. Colvend, wiping his eyes, and trying to speak calmly. "Awful! Only to think of that young fellow, and of that poor brave girl who stuck to him through all. I don't know what to do. How is this wrong ever to be set right? Though she is my daughter, an innocent man must not continue to suffer for her fault. Would to God, Surlees had never given Dane in charge! The prosecution was quite against my wish. The doctors do not think she will ever recover her reason."

"Under the circumstances that is perhaps scarcely to be regretted," said Mr. Gayre.

"Just the remark Dr. Foynson made; but O, there is no living creature can tell what this has been to me! Ever since the terrible truth was forced upon me, I have thought about that unhappy young man till it seemed as though I should go mad myself!"

"I do not imagine if you join with me there can be much difficulty now in procuring his release."

"I will do anything and everything in my power. The cause of this frightful illness was that Fife came to the house and told Dossie, as all other means of clearing Dane seemed unavailable, he meant to give himself up. He frightened the poor little thing

to death; said her letters to him would be read in court. When I got home I found her in the most dreadful state of mind. Of course I did not believe she was in fault then, any more than I believe Fife's statement that night you came to see me at Brighton; but I can't blind myself any longer. She had never been crossed before, and she lacked strength of mind to bear up under the trouble of knowing Dane was in love with some one else. Why couldn't he have fancied my darling? I'd have given her to him, poor child. She was all I had—and now—"

"Gone mad, has she?" commented Mr. Fife, when Mr. Gayre subsequently repeated the substance of Mr. Colvend's statement to that individual. "Don't you believe a word of it; she's not the sort to go mad. I daresay she has had a touch of brain fever, but it would puzzle a wiser man than Dr. Foynson to tell where temper ended and fever began. If they mean to get Dane out, though, without any fuss or publicity, I shall be well enough content now; I am going to turn over a new leaf, and I think I would rather not turn it before a magistrate."

"It is a great pity you do not turn over a new leaf," said Mr. Gayre, "for you certainly are exceedingly clever."

"And trustworthy," added Mr. Fife, "that little matter of the cheque notwithstanding. O, I forgot to mention Mr. Sudlow was at the bank three times to day while you were out. He wants you to make an appointment—he left a message he had something very special to say."

"Did he?" said Mr. Gayre, scarcely able to refrain from smiling.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

MR. GAYRE THANKS HEAVEN.

EIGHT weeks slipped by so fast that, like the seven years Jacob served for Rachel, it seemed but a day; and Mr. Gayre, seated one glorious summer's morning in his private room at Lombard Street, was dreamily reviewing the events which had occurred since the previous July, when a letter was brought to him, directed in Sir Geoffrey's sprawling handwriting. It was a lengthy epistle that Mr. Gayre cut open, not without some curiosity as to what the contents might prove.

'Dear Gayre' (began the Baronet),—'Though you never liked me as much as I liked you, I fancy you will be glad to know I am at last getting better. Whether my leg will ever be a good leg, it is difficult to tell. The doctors say not—which is the reason, I feel inclined to think, it will. Lord, what a lot they are! If I had followed their bidding, I'd have been comfortably tucked up with a spade long and long ago! What do you suppose they kept me—on for one blessed fortnight? You'd never guess—*milk* in some confounded form or other! Gad, I was so weak and wasted at the end of that time, when I looked down at my hands, I thought they belonged to somebody else. Remonstrance was not a bit of good. Bless you, a fellow that used to come and feel my pulse two and three times a day would have put a navvy on the same diet as a new-born child! I'd never have picked up again if it had not been for the landlady, who is as trim and smart an article in petticoats as you ever set your eyes on. She keeps all the business of this house going—ostlers,

waiters, chambermaids, and the whole gang of them. Her husband's occupation is dying as fast as he knows how (the doctors have put *him* on milk and soda-water—ugh! poor wretch!), and the only recreation he has strength enough left to indulge in is whist. There are generally some decent fellows stopping at this hotel, so we manage to make up a party most evenings. While I was pretty bad we were in the habit of playing on my bed, so you see time has not been spent quite unprofitably after all. However, as I was saying, if it had not been for Mrs. FitzHugh—rather a high-flying sort of name, isn't it?—you would never have been troubled more by yours truly.

"For Heaven's sake," I said to her, "get me something fit for a man to drink—not cat-lap!"

"But the doctor, Sir Geoffrey."

"My dear soul," I expostulated, "I am not a calf—if I were, I have no doubt I should relish milk greatly; being what I am, if I don't have some brandy soon, I'll not answer for the consequences."

'Firmness, Gayre—it was firmness saved me. How Mrs. F.'s father did laugh, to be sure, when she told him! His name is Sponner, and it is said he had netted seventy thousand pounds by *always betting against the favourite*. He's a funny old chap, who can scarcely write his name.

"That's a good one!" he roared. "Sir Geoffrey Chelston, the hardest rider and the heaviest drinker in England, put into training on kettle tea and pap! No, no, my lass, that won't do at any price. We'll find him something better than that, doctor or no doctor."

'You may imagine I am pretty comfortable here. I don't exactly

know who is going to pay the piper; but I rather expect Dashwood will stump up. 'Twas his mare, or rather one he was thinking of buying, took the notion of trying a race with the wind. I never went so fast before, and I suppose I may venture to say I never want to go such a pace again. All's well that ends well, though, as I feel quite sure I could not have dropped into better quarters. I thought I had not much to learn in the matter of horseflesh, but the old gentleman has given me a wrinkle or two.

'I had no doubt but that you would get Sudlow to terms. It is a sort of thing far more in your line than mine. You don't say how you managed to screw him up; but so long as he is screwed the *modus operandi* signifies little. Yes, you arrange about the wedding as you like. I can't come up for it; but I wrote to the Canon to know if he wouldn't tie the knot. "You had best let bygones be bygones," I said; "peace and goodwill in families is both politic and Christian. My daughter is making a capital match, and it is always prudent to cultivate friendly relations with a niece who is well off. Peggy is a confoundedly handsome girl—a girl any uncle might be proud of with a rich husband at her back." So, to cut a long story short, the Canon will officiate—that is, if you like. I said I had always kept clear of the family quarrels—water, either cold or hot, being a thing quite out of my line.

'Now the matter rests between you two brothers; just do as you please, it makes very little difference to me. Give Peggy my blessing—I am afraid she won't care for that much; but I have nothing else to present her with. I certainly think she and Sudlow

will run in harness very well together. A selfish man ought always to marry a selfish woman. This will sound like a mistake, but it works well in practice. *Entre nous*, it would have been a thousand pities to spoil two houses with such a pair. There is a hard commercial smack about them both that fills me with astonishment. If Peg had been different, she would have sent him to the right-about long ago. If Sudlow had been different, I could have hobbled him last summer.

'What a splendid girl poor dear Susan has proved herself! Fancy her smuggling that picture of Delilah out of Hilderton's studio!

'The young hound!—what a scandalous thing to paint my daughter's face in such a connection! He meant to exhibit the painting somewhere too, and then there would have been the deuce and all to pay. I am afraid Peg did not act fairly by the lad. She's an out-and-out flirt—a dangerous flirt; these quiet demure women always are. However, she's met with her match in Sudlow. They must arrange matters when they are man and wife. Meanwhile, you and I may thank Heaven we are well out of the whole business. Directly Peg's matter is settled I shall present my petition in bankruptcy. Poor girl! she does not know all her father is going through for her sake! I had thought of having Peg "turned off" at Chelston—the Wokes would have been only too delighted to stand a wedding-spread at The Pleasance—but second thoughts are best, and it seemed to me we should act prudently (one ought always to keep an eye on that future) to play no triumphal march while the disgustingly woolly sheep Sudlow was led up for sacrifice.

'Besides, the Wookes are total abstinence folks; and you know what that means when the success of a marriage feast is in the balance. You have managed splendidly about the settlements. In confidence I may tell you, if it had been impossible to get Sudlow up to the starting-post so weighted, I'd have let Peg take her chance without any settlements at all. After my first London experience of her, I knew she would be a most difficult young woman to "run," and I think we both deserve the highest praise for getting her married at all. My letter has been the work of two mornings. Of your charity write often, if you can, to this poor "Exile of Erin."

'I don't complain—you know I never complain; still, there is no denying the fact that solitary confinement in the height of the London season is rough on yours faithfully,

'GEOFFREY CHELSTON.

'P.S.—One little suggestion: don't you think it might be well to pay that milliner's bill of Peg's? Of course I want to put it in my schedule; but if I do, I'm afraid Madame Rosalie will apply to Sudlow for it, and kick up no end of a row, in the event of his not paying her; and whether he paid her or not, it would make things confoundedly unpleasant for the girl.

'If you agree with me I am sure you will do what I can't, namely, settle with Madame R. As you are acting so generously about the bridal rig-out, all could be paid under one head, and it will be the last thing you will ever have to do for Peg. Tell Susan, by the time her execution morning comes, I mean to be well enough to act as father.

'I am so glad about Dane! As

I always said, no better fellow ever breathed, and from the very first I felt sure his innocence would be proved. When you are amongst jewellers, I wish you would choose some pretty trifle, and send it with the enclosed to Susan. I'll square that account with you out of the *very first* bit of luck which comes in my way.

'G. C.'

Mr. Gayre felt inside the envelope for the enclosure mentioned. It proved to be a slip of paper, on which were written the words: 'From Papa Geoff.'

For a short time Sir Geoffrey's brother-in-law sat contemplating this epistle with a sort of amazed admiration. There had been a period when it would have maddened him; but that period was past, and he could now regard Sir Geoffrey dispassionately as a person upon whose like it seemed most improbable he should ever look again.

Besides, the letter was almost an epitome of the events which had occurred within the space of little over a year. Was it really something less than fifteen months since that day when he sauntered idly across the grass in Hyde Park, and saw Sudlow leaning over the rails? Why, those months seemed to him a whole existence; he had nearly lived a life in the time. What a sermon it all was on the vanity of human hopes, and on the uselessness of mortal projects! What a satire to be commissioned by Papa Geoff. to buy a wedding-gift it was intended he himself should pay for, to present to the woman he loved!

'I thought to manage Sir Geoffrey,' he considered, 'and Sir Geoffrey has managed me. I wonder if he will outwit his new friend, Mr. Sponner? Nothing

more likely. And what about Mrs. FitzHugh, when Mr. FitzHugh goes out of business, and relinquishes whist, and leaves her a widow? Humph! And Mr. Gayre, lighting a match, applied it to the Baronet's letter, and watched the precious missive burn to dust on the hearth.

Whatever his faults—and he had many—the banker was not really mean. All his instincts led him to loyalty, for which reason he did not docket and pigeon-hole his brother-in-law's epistle, and consider, 'This may prove useful some day.'

What he did, however, consider was that he wished he had not to go to Chislehurst, in order to spend a 'nice, quiet, comfortable afternoon.' He was forced to spend many such afternoons at The Warren, and they filled his soul with a terrible despair. What should he do when he was married, and life became a series of such afternoons? Already Susan was avenged. Never had she shrunk with greater horror from the idea of passing existence with him than he recoiled from the notion of spending the years, 'few and evil,' which might be in store for him with Mrs. Jubbins.

It was the old Brunswick Square business over again. She had changed the venue, but the pleadings were the same. He never for half an hour together got out of the Jones, Brown, and Robinson set. Deputy Pettell and others of that connection literally swarmed upon the carpet. Their houses, their furniture, their carriages, their servants, their friends, their parties, their travels, their sayings, their doings—was he never, till death brought peace, to hear any other sort of conversation? Talk of moulding Mrs. Jubbins! He might as well have thought of making her a girl

again, or of cutting down her goodly proportions to the airy symmetry of a Hebe! Endurance was the only thing left for him; and, to do Mr. Gayre justice, he did bear the eternal flow of talk about nothing with saint-like equanimity. He had sold himself for a mess of pottage, and he would have to wear the chains of his captivity, though they galled his flesh and ate into his very soul. Already there had been a few differences of opinion, in all of which Mrs. Jubbins marched off the field with a grand composure in the character of conqueror. She would have felt greatly surprised had any one told her she was, or wanted to be, a conqueror; she honestly believed she was deferring to Mr. Gayre in all things. It is difficult for a woman whose first husband has made an idol of her, and whose widowhood has proved a long career of doing exactly what she liked, to understand her ways and ideas, or even her manners and habits, can possibly be uncongenial to any one who wishes to marry her. Mrs. Jubbins had fallen into the not uncommon mistake of imagining that all she did, and all she had, stood far above the vulgar height, where holes could be picked in either her doings or belongings. She had her own notions, and of course those notions were right. She had her possessions, and those possessions, in her opinion, were precisely the proper possessions. She wished to live in town, and as a natural consequence it was ridiculous to suppose Mr. Gayre could really prefer the country. He knew nothing about the country, and she did; she had lived in it for a whole year, and was deadly tired of it. He had not lived in it at all; if he had, he would be tired of it too. This

was Mrs. Jubbins' mode of reasoning; and it is unnecessary to state that the result of discussing future arrangements with Mr. Gayre invariably ended in his apparent conversion to her views. Considering what Mrs. Jubbins had done for him, he would have been most ungrateful to insist he had any right to maintain his own opinions; but the banker sometimes thought he should like to know whether he might ever be permitted to have an opinion at all. It was very well for Mrs. Jubbins to say, as she did say continually, 'I want to consult you;' but it was scarcely so agreeable to find that these consultations meant well-nigh interminable talks about what the lady wanted to do.

Mr. Gayre knew perfectly well no better nor kinder woman than Mrs. Jubbins, so far as her light went, ever existed; but he also knew she would wear, and was indeed wearing, him to death.

There were things about her which reminded him constantly of his father. He could not forget the monotonous round of small interests, petty details, contemptible gossip, and narrow ideas which made Brunswick Square more irksome to him than narrow cell ever seemed to prisoner. Then he could not say, 'My mind to me a kingdom is,' for he often felt his mind was stultifying while he listened to the even flow of babble that did duty for conversation in Mrs. Jubbins' house.

Could he face the prospect of being cooped up in a town house with that eternal trickle of twaddle always running through his ears; with the Pettells, and the Jones, and others of the same ilk for his only home society; with his old friends banished to his club? for he could not—no, he felt he *could*

not—invite men whose ideas were cosmopolitan, who had travelled, and thought, and read, and seen life, understanding the phrase in its best and widest sense, to come and listen to discussions concerning the amount Mr. Robinson's 'mansion' at Walton had cost to build, or the questionable taste of Mrs. Brown, who, having been taken up by a 'grand High Church set,' had so far forgotten what her poor papa's ideas of Popery were as to go to early service, and walk about the West End clad in hoddens gray, and wearing a close bonnet made of brown straw, just as if she were the wife of a clerk in the receipt of thirty shillings a week.

Further, he could not disguise the fact that, antagonistic as Mrs. Jubbins might be to him, she was beginning to feel him even more antagonistic to her.

Honestly, he meant to make her an excellent husband; but he had no intention of being a foolish one. At the first offset it was clearly understood marriage should not be thought of till sufficient time had elapsed to enable him to release his own capital, and finally put matters between him and his future wife on some business and tangible footing. For a time this arrangement worked admirably, but it could not last for ever; and with dismay Mr. Gayre found himself expected to play the part of lover to a lady he had known ever since she wore short frocks and blue sashes, and whom he should certainly have thought old enough to know better. Something of the awe she formerly felt for him still remained, but it was wearing away. No later than the occasion of his last visit to Chislehurst, she entered through the open window near which he was seated in order to ask him some question, and in the most simple

and natural manner came behind his chair, put a hand on each shoulder, and called him '*dear*.'

Mr. Gayre thought of this experience with a shudder. He recalled the sudden chill her action had sent through him, and earnestly trusted the good generous soul felt nothing of the deadly tremor which for a moment turned his strength into weakness.

He could not draw back now. In honour, in common honesty, he was forced to go on. As long as he could make the woman who trusted him happy and content, what did it signify how wretched he felt? He had been placed in a sore strait; on the one side lay the Scylla of poverty, on the other the Charybdis of an uncongenial marriage.

Matrimony was the only interest Mrs. Jubbins would have accepted and that he could have offered for the use of her fortune. Yes, looking back he could see no other course possible for him to pursue. Given that he dared not face bankruptcy, no resource remained but to marry the relict of Mr. Jubbins. The position did not bear thinking about; so, deciding not to think about it, Mr. Gayre put aside his papers and started for Chislehurst.

He found Mrs. Jubbins arrayed in a very pretty summer dress, which did not become her in the least. Susan or his niece would have looked lovely in it; but the soft flow of the light material, and the cunning interlacing of delicate colours, were death to Mrs. Jubbins' mature charms. Nevertheless, he had to say something about her attire, and he spoke a few words of compliment with such grace as he could assume. That was the first event of an afternoon he will never forget as long as he keeps his memory. From the first moment things went on steadily

chafing his spirit, and indeed inducing such a state of irritability that, finally addressing one of Mrs. Jubbins' young people in a tone of sharp decision, he said, 'Don't be so rude, sir!' Mrs. Jubbins' offspring were, as a rule, extremely rude, but no one had ever ventured to tell them so before; and the lad stared at the banker ere, turning on his heel, he walked out of the room, whistling defiantly.

Mrs. Jubbins looked at Mr. Gayre, and Mr. Gayre looked at Mrs. Jubbins, but neither spoke. The boy had been offensively impertinent; even a mother's partiality couldn't deny that fact. Mr. Gayre regretted his hasty speech, but felt he ought not to apologise. He waited for Mrs. Jubbins to make some remark, but, to his surprise, and relief, she took no verbal notice of what had occurred. Instead, she began to talk of The Warren, and her wish to return to town.

'I have been thinking,' she said, 'that I should like to take a house somewhere in the Kensington direction. I do not care much for Palace Gardens, though the houses there are good, and of course it is nice to look out on the Park. I prefer Campden Hill. I really do not think I should object to Campden Hill.'

'You have quite decided, then, not to return to Brunswick Square?'

'Quite; the neighbourhood, you see, has so altered its character. Besides, the lease has not long to run; and I feel sure Mr. Motten would be glad to take it for the remainder of my term.'

'And I had a letter this morning from an old Indian friend, who is coming home on leave for eighteen months, asking me to look out for a place for him within twelve miles of town.'

The Warren would, I know, suit him exactly.'

'I am so glad. I have taken it on for another year; and I should not like to be under two rents.'

'That is a thing to be avoided, certainly;' and then there ensued another silence. Mr. Gayre felt he was spending a very quiet afternoon indeed.

'Shall we take a turn through the grounds?' asked Mrs. Jubbins; 'the gardens are looking beautiful. As Mrs. Gibson was saying only yesterday, they do Holditch very great credit indeed.'

As he had observed a score of times before, Mr. Gayre again observed there could be no doubt but that Holditch understood his business.

'I must just get a parasol, so we may as well go through the hall;' and accordingly they passed through the hall, where Mr. Gayre had seen Susan sitting amongst the flowers on that night which seemed so long and long ago.

As though she had known of what he was thinking, Mrs. Jubbins, directly they got upon the gravelled walk leading down the hill-side on which the gardens lay, began,

'That dear Miss Drummond was here the other day; she came to say good-bye.'

'Why, where is she going?' asked Mr. Gayre.

'To her cousin's, to the place where she spent her girlhood. She is to be married from there; did you not know?'

'I did know something of it, but I had forgotten. How is she looking?'

'Radiantly happy. Poor thing! I am so sorry for her!'

'Sorry! Why?'

'O, because she *will* marry that

young man; and what *can* be in store for her but misery? Nobody will ever believe in his innocence; and even supposing he had been innocent when he was sent to that dreadful place, how can he be fit for any nice woman to associate with after living among thieves and murderers and, as Deputy Pettell calls them, the very scum of the population?'

'I do not think we need discuss that question again,' suggested Mr. Gayre, who had heard it discussed till he was tired.

'Then they have so little money; nothing, I assure you, but the trifle she has left out of her own small fortune.'

'They have a great deal of love, though.'

'But, good gracious, people can't live entirely on love! And, after all, I am afraid, though I did not say so to her, there is much more love on the one side than on the other. I shall never feel quite satisfied about that business of Miss Colvend. If he had not paid attentions to the young lady, of course she would never have thought of getting so violently fond of him.'

'You must understand such matters better than I,' said Mr. Gayre humbly.

'And I have not patience with his folly in refusing to accept compensation from Mr. Colvend. He says it would look as if he were being bought off—like taking hush-money. So ridiculous! "He ought to take all he can for your sake, my dear," I told her; but she wouldn't see it. Her cousin means to try and get him an appointment; but I suppose he can only expect some paltry salary.'

'I rejoice to hear she is looking well and happy.'

'Yes; but I am afraid that won't last. She spoke very gratefully about you, though not so

gratefully as I consider she ought, considering the *enormous* trouble you gave yourself over Mr. Dane's affair.'

'I only wish I had been able to do more, and do it sooner,' he answered. 'Ah, there goes Joshua! Did you see how he turned back the moment he saw us? He hasn't forgiven me yet for telling him not to be rude.'

'No, poor boy; you see, my children have never been spoken to in that way.'

'If you really think I went beyond the limit of what I ought to have said, I suppose I ought to apologise.'

'No, no; don't think of such a thing,' said Mrs. Jubbins hurriedly. 'You did not mean to vex me; only—only—you scarcely understand—you have not been accustomed to young people, and, besides—'

He looked at her inquiringly, as she paused and coloured violently.

'I fear I have annoyed you even more than I thought,' he said. 'Believe me, I had not the slightest idea my remark would wound you in any way. I am very sorry. You know, if there be one person in the world whose feelings I should consider more than another, that person is yourself.'

She made a little sign to ask him to stop; then, all of a sudden, turning and beginning to retrace her steps, she murmured, in a voice so low he could scarcely catch her tones,

'I want to speak to you. Let us go and sit under the ash-trees; we shall not be interrupted there.'

Mr. Gayre assented, wondering greatly. He had not understood an inexplicable change in her manner, which he noticed from the first moment she greeted him. What could she be going to say?

He racked his brain to imagine what had happened.

Afterwards he remembered each detail of that interview, could recall the way the sunbeams lay athwart the road, could see the trembling of the leaves, feel again the touch of the gentle wind which lightly swayed the branches; but just at that moment all sense of observation seemed swallowed up in amazement.

'It is no use beating about the bush,' she began; and her voice was not quite steady. 'I will tell you at once what I have been thinking. We must never marry—our engagement must end.'

'Why?' he asked.

'The last two months have been very pleasant to me,' she went on, unheeding his question; 'one week out of them, I may say, was the happiest in all my life. When I look back I can never remember a time when I did not care for you; when I was a girl you were the hero of my imagination, the ideal man of all my girlish dreams.'

He was about to speak; but she laid her hand on his, as a token she did not want him to do so.

'When I was left a widow, and my mother told me your father wished you and me to marry, I felt life almost too happy; I forgot my dead husband and all he had done for me and mine, and thought of you, and you only. I am not ashamed to tell you this now,' she proceeded, after the slightest break, 'because it is all past and done with; we will, I hope, be good friends for ever; but I have thought matters over, and know it is best we should be nothing more.'

'May I again ask you why—I shall not try to influence your decision; but if not disagreeable, I wish you would tell me the

causes which have induced you to arrive at it?

'I will tell you as well as I can. First of all, the conviction has been growing upon me for a long time that we were unfitted for each other—it is no sudden fancy of mine—that we should never be quite happy together. You have your notions, and I have mine; and we could not make them agree. Even in upholstery, the things I like you don't like; and it is the same in other matters. That we might get over, though; but what I could never get reconciled to is that you do not care for me—really. If you ever had cared for me you would have said so, years ago—'

'Passionate attachment,' he urged, 'can perhaps scarcely be expected from a man of my age; but—'

'Yes, I understand all that,' she interrupted; 'but I should not feel satisfied. I know now why at times lately I have been so unsettled and miserable—yes, miserable—even while I believed myself happy; but there is more still. I have yet another reason—'

'I must indeed be a heinous criminal,' he remarked, with a faint smile.

'No,' she said, 'you are not to blame at all; the fault is entirely my own. I have no right to marry—anybody. My husband left me in charge of a great trust, and I ought to try to be worthy of it. How could I do justice to his children and to you? I never thought of marrying anybody but you, and I shall never think of marrying again. I mean to live for my sons and my daughters, and to be what your father once said I was—a faithful steward.'

'It is perhaps quite as well, then, that I spoke to Joshua as I

did to-day; otherwise you might not have found out your duty till it was too late,' said Mr. Gayre.

'Yes, I should. I had found it out, and what do you think showed it to me?'

'I would really rather not hazard any conjecture.'

'Miss Drummond.'

'Why, what did she say?'

'She said nothing—except two words. I'll tell you how it happened. When we were talking together, and she was speaking about how happy she was, I could not help telling her I was very happy too. I forgot for the moment you and I had agreed to let no one know how affairs stood for the present, and I went on, "I am going to marry a man I have loved all my life; your friend Mr. Gayre." I assure you, it slipped out quite accidentally.'

'Yes, and then—'

'She repeated "*Mr. Gayre!*" just like that, in an incredulous sort of tone, yet still as if she were shocked; and I shall never forget the look in her face, like some one who could scarcely believe her ears. Then she recovered herself, and said prettily she wished us all sorts of happiness; but the way she cried out "*Mr. Gayre!*" and her startled expression, have haunted me ever since. I could not close my eyes last night, I felt so wretched; and then, when you spoke to Joshua as you did, I knew it was best we should consider everything at an end. As for the money, don't trouble yourself about that—keep it as long as you like—I always knew you would not wrong me or my children of a penny; but lending money is one thing and marrying another. And now say you are not angry with me, and that we shall never cease to be friends?'

'Mrs. Jubbins, I never respect-

ed or admired you so much as I do at this moment, and I shall always be your devoted friend,' said Mr. Gayre; and it is only right to add he spoke from his heart.

'Relief!' Was that any word to express the load taken from his heart? As he returned to town that night he felt very humble, very penitent, very thankful. 'Heaven has been more merciful to me than I deserve,' he thought; and who can deny but that there was a considerable amount of truth in the observation?

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

CONCLUSION.

WHITSUNTIDE, 1877. May once again, for the third time since that morning when Mr. Gayre stood beside the railings in Hyde Park, and watched Margaret Chelston's meeting with the 'fairest of fair women.'

London was virtually deserted. On the previous Saturday London had despatched her hundreds, and tens of hundreds—her millions, indeed—into the quiet country, to the seashore, and the Continent. On Monday morning there was not a street, situated in as low and poor neighbourhood a district visitor could name, but found means to raise enough money to charter some sort of conveyance, and proceed behind wretched horses, that must long previously have learned to curse the sound of a corneopan, to such places of resort as represent fun and fashion to the excursionist mind. The great metropolis was like a city of the dead. Round and about the Royal Exchange many commercial corpses lay awaiting burial; but the ceremony being compulsorily delayed till after Bank Holiday,

the men whose cheques and bills had been dishonoured were waiting in suburban villas and great West End mansions for some miracle to happen in the interval which should enable them to begin the struggle of business life afresh on the Tuesday following Pentecost.

In the streets scarcely a human being was to be met with. Catmen, recognising a possible fare afar off, hailed him with effusion; a few country cousins wandered four abreast along the pavements without getting 'shouldered' for their pains; lads who had no pennies wherewith to pay train or tram fares tied white woollen scarves tightly round their throats, and started to walk for the nearest places where sticklebacks could be fished for, or the pleasing sport witnessed of starved donkeys being thrashed by brutes armed with heavy sticks. Scarce a soul was abroad. The better classes who were forced to remain in town kept close within doors; on the railways all distinctions of class were virtually abolished; it was possible to walk from Temple Bar to Ludgate Circus down the middle of the horse-road; the West End conveyed a pleasing impression of rustic seclusion; men walked to their clubs as if a large balance of the seventy allotted years remained in which to stroll along the shady side of the street; in the home counties rhododendrons and early roses, hawthorn, laburnum, lilac, a thousand wild flowers—yellow buttercups, meek-eyed daisies, springing grass—girt London round with a natural belt of emerald green, gemmed by a thousand stars of divine hues, such as no astronomer, no jeweller, ever, out of his own consciousness, could have imagined.

In the hedgerows, by the wayside, flowers were springing, bloom-

ing, dying. It was an early year, and in London a May sun positively beamed upon its inhabitants. There were not many belonging to the better condition of life remaining to be beamed on. Still one man, well considered and reputed to be wealthy, was walking down Duke Street, St. James's, on his way to Victoria Station.

The quietest of quiet pedestrians, the sedatest of sedate gentlemen. Certainly not very young, presumably not very old; a clean-cut, closely-shaved, military-looking sort of person, who might have been anybody, from peer to poet, but who happened to belong neither to the Upper Ten nor to the dear Bohemia.

Suddenly the silence of the West End street was rent with, 'Gayre, Gayre! Hillo, hillo!' and Gayre—for so the gentleman was named—turning round, beheld a figure on the opposite side of the way, making frantic signs for him to stop.

'Ah! you remember me,' this individual said, as they shook hands in the middle of the horse-road. 'Gad, you are looking well! Years, I vow, run by and leave you younger!'

'Why, Sir Geoffrey, I did not expect to meet you here!'

'And, by Jove, I did not expect to meet you! Just see here, Gayre'—and the Baronet affectionately passed his arm through that of his brother-in-law, as if they were the dearest of dear friends—'I swear it is like water in a thirsty land to look on your pleasant face again. I am glad to have even this glimpse of you. I called at Sudlow's; but, faith, I found such cold welcome there I was glad to return to mine inn.'

'They are not a very genial pair, certainly.'

'No; but you remember what I always said. I mayn't be a very

sharp fellow, but I'm the very deuce in the way of prophecy. I always knew they would suit each other to a T. Lord, how she did go on about my marriage! "You hold your tongue, my girl," I said; "there was trouble enough to get *you* married." That shut *her* up.' 'And how is your wife?' asked Mr. Gayre.

For answer his brother-in-law pulled a newspaper from his pocket, smoothed it carefully over his knee, turned to the first page, folded it up so as to leave the 'births' outside, and pointed out one especial paragraph for perusal. The paragraph ran thus:

'At Brockborough, near Doncaster, the wife of Sir Geoffrey Chelston, Baronet, of a son and heir.'

'It is all their own composition,' exclaimed the happy father. 'Gad, I wish they'd make me an heir; but I'm nobody now, of course. I came up to town to be clear of the fuss. Old Sponner is just out of his senses with delight at being grandfather to an embryo baronet.'

'I am sure I congratulate you all very heartily.'

'It's more than Peggy did. I said, "It's of no use your turning up your nose; you'd better by far be civil to the young stranger. He is born with a silver spoon in his mouth. He'll have lots of money when he comes of age. Old Sponner swears he shall have all his money; and his mother says *she'll* see I have no chance of touching it." By the bye, I stopped a night at Susan's on my way up. She's got a jolly little girl, and she is prettier than ever; and as for Dane, he's fairly crazy about her. You'd think no man ever owned a wife before. She's just the same as she used to be, only a little quieter. I think she can't quite forget all that trouble.

She is the best creature! She persuaded Lal Hilderton to leave London; and he lives in a cottage on the estate, with Sue's old nurse to cook his meals and mend his socks. He's doing real good work, I hear—don't profess to care for that sort of thing myself. Weren't you surprised to hear Dane had got his grandfather's property? Good job the miserly old sinner could never make up his mind to sign a will. Well, they are a very happy pair—as happy a pair as you'd wish to see. I often wonder you never married, Gayre; but perhaps you're as well as you are—women, as a rule, are a confounded lot of trouble.'

'I am sorry you think so, for I have asked one to take care of me.'

'Who is it—Mrs. Jubbins?'

'Mrs. Jubbins will never marry anybody. No, this is the daughter of a man who was my superior officer when I first entered the army. She is a charming girl, or rather woman, for she is nearly thirty, and I hope and believe we are exactly suited to each other. Her father leaves for India before the end of the summer, and then we shall take up our residence permanently at The Warren. You recollect Mrs. Jubbins' party there?'

'Rather!' said Sir Geoffrey. 'Well, I'm heartily glad to hear this, my boy; and whenever you're ready, only let me know, and I'll come and look you up. Gad, you've decided on a sweet place. I am more pleased than I can tell you to think you are going to live at The Warren—always thought

that dear good creature Mrs. Jubbins was the wrong thing in the right place there. Money's not everything—that's what I say a dozen times a week; but I can't get the set I've got mixed up with to believe me.'

'You have quite recovered from your accident?'

'Yes, quite, thank you—leg's a bit stiff still, but I can ride as well as ever, Heaven be praised; don't know what would become of me if I couldn't. By the bye, I was deucedly glad to hear you are allowing interest on balances now. I can send you lots of accounts, and I don't want a penny of commission. Yes, indeed, it was quite a surprise to me to hear some fellows saying, the other day, the old Tortoise might chance to outstrip some new hares yet. There's Graceless! I must be off. Hi! Gayre, just one thing more. Mark my words. You'll see that youngster won't be able to drink a drop of anything stronger than water. I know he'll turn out a regular milksop. Shouldn't wonder if they make a parson of him. The Reverend Sir Ferdinand Chelston, Baronet—you'll find that's what it will be. Ferdinand is his mother's selection. Well, good-bye; don't quite forget me.'

The banker stood looking after Sir Geoffrey's retreating figure for a few minutes; his legs were a little more bowed and his hat a little more on one side than usual, but otherwise there was no change in his appearance.

'Forget you!' thought Mr. Gayre as he turned away; 'never!'

A NIGHT OF ADVENTURE.

BY AN ARTILLERY OFFICER.

IN the spring of the year 1877, when the Russians were pushing their victorious forces towards the city of their conquered foe, and England was waiting, apprehensive of the result, I had the fortune to be attached to a dépôt battery of Garrison Artillery in the Southern District. At that time there was a great scarcity of subalterns in the Royal Regiment, and I found myself the only officer of that rank in a battery of recruits some two hundred strong. As may be imagined, I had quite as much work on my hands as I cared for.

It was with mingled feelings that I heard the news that Lord Beaconsfield had determined on calling out the Reserves. On the one hand, the act seemed prophetic of imminent war, with all the chances of promotion and distinction that such a prospect opens to the soldier; whilst on the other there was the immediate certainty of plenty of additional hard work, and of endless trouble with men just transferred from their civil occupations to the stirring life of the army. On the whole, however, I think I rather enjoyed the excitement offered by the change.

One morning I was called into the colonel's office, informed that a large detachment of forty men of the Reserve was to join my battery from Wales, and that I was to proceed thither immediately with a trustworthy sergeant and bring them to the dépôt. The colonel did not scruple to tell me that he would not have entrusted so difficult a task to an officer with

as little experience and length of service as myself, had he had any other to send; but as there was no one available, he must make a virtue of necessity, and hoped I would prove worthy of the confidence reposed in me. At the same time, he gave me to understand that, once the men were in my charge, I should be held responsible for any who managed to desert or otherwise absent themselves on the journey.

I always disliked responsibility, and had, moreover, an idea—whether well or ill founded, I shall not pause to consider—that the small pay of a subaltern was not intended to cover any duties of great importance, but was merely an income drawn for the performance of certain fixed pieces of routine, such as visiting guards, going round to inspect the men's dinners, and so on. I cannot, therefore, say that I at all relished the orders I had just received, especially since I could very well realise the difficulty of conveying forty rude Welsh miners so long a distance through a country unknown to them. I only stipulated, however, that the sergeant who was to be my companion should be a man I knew and could trust, and who could talk Welsh on occasion. Fortunately, just such a one as I needed was available, and we started on our journey determined to make the best of it.

I do not intend here to give an account of the manner in which I carried out my mission, though indeed some of the incidents were

amusing enough. I was compelled perforce to stay longer than I had intended in Wales gathering my men together; and on the morning of our final departure half the population of the country seemed to be collected together to see us off. Had there been the least unwillingness on the part of the new recruits to join, I should have been quite unable to muster them amongst the crowds that attended; but both they and their relatives were only too willing to serve her Majesty and to drink her health. Man after man was carried aloft by his admiring friends, dead drunk, and thrust into the carriages anywhere and anyhow, till my number was complete, and the amused engine-driver could at length start his train. Of the whole party, I think that myself, my sergeant, and a single total abstainer, who happened to be the sole one of my men who could speak a word of English, were the only persons sober. I kept my charges well supplied with liquor, in defiance of all precedent, carried them from Euston to London Bridge in a couple of omnibuses, and had them all safely housed in barracks before they well knew they had started. I fear some of them must have felt very ill the day after, but that, of course, I could not help.

But the adventure I am about to relate had little to do with my Reserve men. It took place on the second night after my arrival in Wales. My sergeant and I had taken up our quarters in a little out-of-the-way village on the coast, not far from the Menai Straits. For many reasons I do not care to give its name. We had arrived there late in the evening, as darkness was drawing on; and, by dint of my companion's knowledge of the lan-

guage, had found out the position of the only place of entertainment that was available—a little inn situated at some distance from the town. I was struck, on approaching it, by the wild and picturesque beauty of the locality. It was perched on the top of a high cliff which seemed almost to overhang the sea below; and between the door and the verge of the perpendicular descent, unguarded by fence or rail, nothing intervened but a patch of grass, blackened and withered by the spray cast up by the westerly gales of the equinox, and not more than four yards wide. Why the builder should have selected such a spot was not easy to say. Perhaps he was a man who loved to watch the wild moods of the ocean, and found them harmonise with those of his own soul. It looked the very place for some terrible scene of midnight murder and violence, such as so often happened in the old smuggling days.

The house itself was a good one, and the landlord, as he came to the door to welcome us, seemed a quiet good-natured looking man. He showed us our rooms, and served our supper in a lofty chamber whose windows looked out upon the sea, that already began to moan through the rocky caves and passes, with the restless motion that foretells a rising storm.

After supper my sergeant strolled down to the village to see his men and arrange about getting them together in the morning; and the landlord, with whom he had struck up an acquaintance, accompanied him to show him the persons he required. Before leaving the house, he said something to my comrade in Welsh.

'He says, sir,' said the ser-

geant, saluting, 'that he hopes you won't mind being left alone in the house for an hour or two. No one will intrude upon you. There is one other gentleman stopping here, but he is out now, and most likely won't be back till morning. He is a man who goes about with a hammer collecting bits of rock.'

'Ah, a geologist,' I replied. 'No, I have no objection to be left alone. I would come down to the village with you, but that I am tired, and I think I will just smoke a pipe and go to bed.'

This message being duly translated to my host, he made me a bow, and the two started off, shutting the door after them. I lit my pipe and made myself comfortable with a couple of chairs by the fire. There is no more sleepy occupation than watching tobacco-smoke curling upwards, and I soon fell into a doze. I do not know how long I had slept when I was awakened by a stir in the room, and saw at once that the 'other gentleman' had returned sooner than he was expected, and was now regarding me with some interest.

He was a man of about thirty-five, tall and well-made, dressed in a thick frieze suit, with a belt of the same material round the waist. In his hand were a bag of fossils and rock specimens, and a geologist's hammer. These he laid on the table, and then came over and shook hands with me.

'I did not expect to meet a gentleman in this out-of-the-way place,' he said. 'No one comes here unless it be to follow such pursuits as mine, or from a love of seeing Nature unspoiled by man's handiwork.'

I was glad of some company, and told him what had brought me there. He set my mind somewhat at ease by saying that, from

what he had seen of the people, he thought my task would be simple enough; and then we drifted into an interesting conversation. He was, I found, a clever, well-read man, and we got on excellently together; but I noticed now and then an anxious watching expression in his eyes for which I could not account. I was not, however, much of a judge of physiognomy, and did not trouble myself with theories on the subject.

As we were talking the moan of the sea grew louder and louder, and at length came a sudden dash of wind and rain against the windows. The gale was beginning in earnest.

What followed I can scarcely expect my readers to believe; and indeed, looking back on it now as I sit in my cosy quarters, with the lamp burning brightly on the table, I could almost think that I had been the victim of some terrible hallucination: but it was real enough to me that night.

After the first impetuous gust of the storm there came a pause of stillness, and in the unnatural tension of the nerves that one feels in such an interval of expectancy, I heard, as clearly as ever I heard anything in my life, a woman's voice outside the window crying in a wailing tone, 'O Jack, Jack!'

'She will be blown over the cliff!' I cried. 'What can she be doing there?' and I rose to open the door.

My companion did not answer a word. I glanced at him, and saw that his face, lips and all, had paled to a ghastly whiteness. His eyes were fixed upon the window with an expression of such deadly fear as I hope I may never see again.

It was useless to expect help

from him; so, mentally setting him down as an arrant coward, I ran to the house door and opened it, intending to let in the wayfarer whose voice I had heard.

As I raised the latch the wind rushed in with impetuous violence and nearly tore the door from my hands. A cold dash of mingled spray and rain met me full in the face.

'Come in, whoever you are,' I cried impatiently; 'I can't hold the door open all night.'

There was no answer. I stepped outside and looked round. It was full moon that night, and though the clouds were thick there was a glimmer of light sufficient to see any object within a few yards' distance. There was a phosphorescent lustre on the sea that gleamed brightly now and then as the waves broke on the rocks, and a frightened sea-bird almost brushed my face as it flew past. But of the woman I expected to see there was no trace whatever.

Puzzled and irritated, I walked round the house to see where she could have gone. At the back of the building there was a broad open field, without any trees or shrubs that could serve as a hiding-place. It seemed impossible that any one could have crossed it and got out of sight during the few moments that had elapsed since I heard the cry; nevertheless, such had evidently been the case, for there was no one there.

I went in again and closed the door, determined to think twice before I went to the trouble of opening it again, whoever might demand admittance. My companion was sitting just as I left him, with the same look on his face. I spoke to him twice, but received no answer. Fearing he might be in a fit, I went over to him and raised his arm. It felt stiff and unnatural. I went to

the table for some water, intending to dash it in his face and rouse him if possible.

Hardly had I made a step forward when the same voice I had heard before sounded once more from without. This time there was no mistaking the intense agony of the tone. I had never heard anything in the least like it, and it rooted me to the spot where I stood. The words it spoke were, 'Come, come, come!' three times repeated.

To my great surprise, the man I had believed in a dangerous fit rose and moved towards the door. I can scarcely describe the way in which he walked. It was as though his whole nature was striving to prevent the action, and yet some stronger power compelled him to advance. I saw him raise the latch of the outer door, and then I followed him to see what would ensue. I never even thought of speaking to him; I could feel that were I to do so he would not hear.

The storm had reached its height as we left the house. The spray was driving in clouds across the little patch of grass; and now and then a piece of white foam, blown up from the seething caldron below, would fly past us into the darkness beyond. The man made but one step from the doorway, and stood still, with his eyes fixed on the sea. He seemed entirely insensible to the war of the elements and to the dash of the rain in his face. Something beyond outward sensations had absorbed all his faculties for the time being. We stood thus a moment, and then, coming now from the ocean itself or the air above it, sounded those words again, 'Come, come, come!' My companion made another step or two straight onwards.

'Are you mad?' I cried, as I sprang forward and caught him in

my arms. 'One pace more and you will be over the cliff! Where are you going?'

He heeded me no more than if I had been myself a phantom of the tempest instead of a being of flesh and blood. I felt that I had no power to restrain him, so I shifted my hold and caught him round the knees. We fell together on the ground at the very verge of the precipice.

Then began a terrible struggle. He fought with the strength of a madman, I with the desperation of a man who contends for his life. The storm howled about us, and the whole air seemed full of mocking voices, shrieks, and laughter. Slowly but surely he was dragging me to the edge. I would gladly have released him now to save myself, but he would not loose his hold. Soon I felt that he had got himself half over the cliff, and I knew that I was too exhausted to hold on much longer. Nearer and nearer I came to the fatal spot! I gave myself up for lost, and tried my best to frame a prayer. At least, I thought, if I die, it is in a good cause.

Suddenly a strong hand caught me by the collar and drew me violently back. The wretched man lost his clutch of me and fell! A long shrill scream came up from below and mingled with the exulting shriek of the wind.

I was borne into the house and laid on a couch. I am not given to fainting, but it was some moments before my nerves could recover the shock they had received. At length I looked about me, and saw my sergeant, the landlord, and another well-dressed man whose face I did not know.

'Well, sir,' the sergeant was saying to the latter, 'your work seems to have been taken out of your hands to-night. We were only just in time!'

'Only just in time, indeed!' was the answer. 'Now, sir, I see you are yourself again; and I must ask you to tell me how the scene came about that we were fortunate enough to interfere in. I am a police-officer from Bow Street.'

As well as I could, I told him all that had occurred. He heard me to the end quietly, and the sergeant, meanwhile, at the earnest request of the landlord, translated the story into Welsh as I went on. When I had finished, the detective shook his head.

'I see I must make up the best tale I can for my superiors,' he said. 'No offence to you, sir; but they wouldn't believe a word of what you have just been telling me. I can't say just what I think about it myself; I never heard of such a case before. Why, he must have gone quite mad! I knew he was very fond of the woman, and I thought something of the kind was likely; but what you tell me you heard is beyond me, I confess. Had you known anything of the murder, sir?'

'No,' said I; 'surely you don't mean to tell me that that man was a murderer?'

'He was indeed, sir; and I came here to-night to arrest him. He had evaded us all for the last week; but yesterday I got a clue as to where he had gone, and followed him down. I got your sergeant here to act interpreter for me with the landlord, when I met them both in the village, and from what he said I knew that his "quiet gentleman who collected bits of rock" was the man I was after; so I came on here at once, and you know the rest. It was lucky for you that we did not enter the house by the back way. Five minutes more would have done for you, sir!'

'They would, indeed,' I an-

swered, shuddering a little at the recollection. 'But who then did he murder?'

'His own wife, sir; a woman who from all accounts was as fond of him as she could be. Some one, I have yet to find who, forged a letter that made him think she had ceased to care for him. I fancy he was always subject to fits of madness; anyhow, no one knows exactly how it happened, but she was found one morning dead in her bed, with the marks of fingers on her throat, and he had disappeared, taking with him all the loose money he had in the house. He had a good sum lying in the bank, which he could have withdrawn at any time by writing a cheque, and his not having done so is a proof to me that he had not premeditated the murder. I daresay the

temptation came to him all on a sudden—it usually does, I have observed. Anyhow, he is dead now, poor gentleman; and may God have mercy on his soul!'

'Amen!' I answered.

That is the story of my night of adventure. I have often thought over what appears the supernatural part of it since, but without much effect. The only theory I can frame to account for it is the somewhat lame one that the hallucinations of my mad companion were so powerful that his mind had succeeded in impressing them upon my own, as the mesmeriser can force an idea upon his patient. I confess I am not myself satisfied with such an explanation; but if any of my readers have not a better one ready they must take it for the true one, *faute de mieux*.

Riverside Sketches.

III. FLAGS.

THERE are many unnamed slums down by the side of the great water highway of our city, pur-lieus where all that is vile and degraded amongst humanity finds a harbourage. Much of the anchorage is not safe for a prolonged season, except to those who pursue definite callings.

In Linnet Lane the tide ebbed and flowed frequently, stranding strange and nameless humanities more often than in alleys a degree more reputable. Numberless little lanes and dark narrow passages, ready to hide for a night an offender's head, branch out of it. Within sight there are rotten tenements adjoining wharves, where boats are always handy, and here and there a cabin built out of an old barge, with mysterious exits behind and before. The centre of a large acreage of villany was Linnet Lane. The floods of police inspection periodically swept around and about it, and permanent dwellers had needs have some well-authenticated calling. But, from its nearness to the river and its many bifurcating avenues of escape, it was highly favoured as a temporary resting-place. Waifs and strays of villanous appearance and shady antecedents took refuge for a few hours or a few nights in the many low lodging-houses which advertised their claims to notice here. What mattered to such as these the filth and squalor of many-bedded dormitories, the horrible stench of river mud, the reeking rotten-

ness of decaying walls and plaster? These were of a race inured to damp and mould and corruption of all sorts. To such intelligences it would be an-unconceivable paradise where rust and moth did not offend or thieves break through and steal. They came to Linnet Lane to shelter from fog and rain and pitiless winds, for one night not to be 'moved on.'

The most popular house of entertainment in this region rejoiced in the title of the Lamb of Goshen. It was not a public-house, and how or why the title had originated was lost in the obscurity of bygone times. There was not even an illicit dealing in beer carried on within Mrs. Doo's premises. This lady, the purveyor of other coarse refreshments, had a wholesome dread of the police. Nevertheless, this lodging-house bore a distinguishing title, which established its precedence over other equally vile habitations. Here dwelt Flags. The girl's age was problematic. To onlookers it was not quite apparent whether she was a child or woman, for Flags had, so to speak, no legs whereby her stature might declare itself. She was paralysed from her waist downwards, and sat upon the hard framework of a horse-hair sofa from morning till night. She had childish hands, thin and delicate, which laboured incessantly. Flags had, moreover, long tawny locks, unkempt, but beautiful in tangled dulness, as they hung about her narrow

shoulders and contracted chest. Her skin was dull and colourless, as that of one who lives in perpetual shade. Only her golden-brown eyes, set in deep sockets, redeemed the lifeless colour of her face. The girl's clothes were not of much account; they were rags holding together, and just sufficing for decency. But it did not signify greatly what manner of garments she wore, for she was usually encumbered and encircled with an array of tattered and stained Union Jacks or other standards. It was her profession to mend and patch these things.

Below the grimy piece of paste-board gummed to the best window-pane of the Lamb of Goshen, certifying that here there were 'lodgers took in,' a lesser and still grimmer card might have been remarked declaring 'Flags mended here.' But there was no necessity for this notice; the fame of the dexterous fingers within was fully established without need of advertisement. For twopence or threepence Flags would not only supply the pieces of bright-hued material required, but would apply her needle for hours to mend some rent or patch some hole made by the fierce wind's caresses. Flags had a variety of customers—Dutchmen, who smelt of rum, and were as round as their own cheeses; fair Swedes, who were calm and cold, and never seemed in haste, and were always honest in their dealings; excitable Frenchmen, who paid compliments, and cheated her if they could. But it was the barge-men who sailed down the river that Flags preferred to hold dealings with, as a rule. They were rude and boisterous, and too fond of beer; but they were intelligible, and were ready to give and take in chaff, an exchange she dearly loved. They had been her earliest

patrons; by them she had lived, bodily and mentally, for many years. The sailing-barges, which brought hay, straw, bricks from the Medway and other parts of the English coast, sometimes from the nearest points of the Continent, were known by Flags. She knew all about the pleasant life on board—knew what such barges under canvas can really do, in spite of their flat bottoms. Flags had heard of their regattas; was acquainted with the shape of the sails; knew, as she thought, how pretty they looked with the sun shining on their ruddy brown canvas. She had acquaintances on barges that traded to Colchester, Ipswich, even Newcastle. From them she gleaned a knowledge of the English coast, learned what rough weather was, how strong the tides, how angry the sea, how helpful the winds. Knowledge that came to others as a matter of course, by sight and experience, was only slowly gathered in and treasured in the dark kitchen of the Lamb of Goshen. Yet Flags held views of life not altogether erroneous or unholy. The spark of imagination lived and was fed even in such vile surroundings. To a few the girl was the bright spot of the Lamb of Goshen. For her sake some, more worthy than the rest, would come a second time to Linnet Lane. Yet she only lived by sufferance in the miserable apartment of the filthy den. Report had it that she was a niece, or otherwise related to Mrs. Doo, the proprietress of the establishment, who called herself 'a lone widder.' However, no special grace on the part of this personage signalised the relationship. In her more convivial moments, Mrs. Doo had been known to become oracular concerning some of her acquaintances; but if there

was anything to divulge regarding Flags, it never leaked out. The girl paid for board and lodging, and the right to breathe of the poisonous atmosphere. No abatement in the usual tariff for weekly boarders was made on her behalf.

It was not surprising that after a time her wits should become sharpened. Much strange material drifted past her; and after suffering losses from small loans and rash advances, Flags acquired no little skill in reading physiognomies. Her dislikes and distrusts were the fruit of observation more than instinct. Circumstances notwithstanding, she was a vivacious young person with a sharp address, ready for *habitué* or new-comer. No one could enter the Lamb of Goshen without running the gauntlet of her inquiry and criticism. Her needle, her tongue, and her eyes were equally swift and sharp.

One bleak December evening there came to the lodging-house a young and handsome girl; that is to say, she might have been handsome had she been less emaciated and sullen-looking.

'Will you take me in?' she said defiantly to Mrs. Doo, who stood with her arms akimbo on her broad hips, surveying the applicant, who shivered in the doorway.

That she was a stranger was evident. There was scant ceremony in seeking admittance, in a general way, at the Lamb of Goshen.

'I don't shut the door on no one when I sees the colour of money. If you wishes to be took into the general wimmen's apartment it are tuppence for a shake-down. Yer don't look like paying a tizzy for a double-bedded room, with the chance of another gal comin' along of you.'

Silently the applicant put her

hand in her pocket and produced some coppers—eight or ten, it might be.

'Tuppence will do,' she said laconically. 'May I sit alongside the fire awhile before going upstairs?'

She had a weary despairing look. Evidently she would not be surprised at a curt refusal. But Mrs. Doo had feasted sumptuously on cold pork, and was in a placable mood. The girl, having paid her twopence, was suffered to take possession of a stool not far from Flags. It seemed that this young person took no notice of such colloquies. Her nimble fingers went on at their task by the light of an ill-smelling lamp. The nimbus of dull auburn hair around the sharp thin face for a moment attracted the lodger's attention. The golden-brown eyes were hidden, and after a little space the new-comer's interest relaxed. She sat gazing into the fire.

When Mrs. Doo had retired to her potato-peeling in a back region, Flags looked up. A long puzzled look. In a sepulchral voice, which was meant for a whisper, she said at last,

'You ain't a riverside gal?' Her eyes fell on decent clothes and a collar, quite an unnecessary adjunct in these latitudes.

'No,' said the other briefly, stretching out hands, which were not rough, to the blaze.

'What brought you here?' continued Flags, persistently staring at her.

'Might be fancy,' answered the stranger, with a touch of sullenness in her voice.

'What's yer name?'

'Bell.'

'Bell what?' Flags bit off an end of thread with a vicious snap of her teeth.

'It don't signify to you. Maybe you'd like a reference as well.'

Flags laughed with evident enjoyment.

'Curiosity, ain't it? I likes sperrit. Keep it up, Bell.'

After a pause Flags began again, 'Ain't yer hungry?'

The handsome girl nodded with a faintly flickering smile, as if deriding the weakness.

'Yer can have supper here for threepence. It ain't much as to quality, but it fills ye.'

Bell searched her pocket for the few coppers, and held them out gravely to the inspection of the needlewoman.

'That's the last of them.'

Flags knitted her brow dubiously, drawing figures on the table with her needle.

'No reg'lar work?' she questioned.

Bell shook her head.

'I'll treat yer,' said Flags munificently, observing the girl looking speculatively at the coins in her hand.

Bell turned angrily upon her puny friend, as she shook back her heavy mane and rapped her little brass thimble on the table.

'I ain't a beggar—yet!' and the dark eyes flashed a moment before they were suffused with tears. Then the proud head was lowered.

'Tain't charity; it are a friendly feeling. I've took a likin' to yer. I'm a wonner for seeing through folks. You're the respectablest girl as has come into this house for many a long day. Yer can treat me this day twelvemonth, if yer gets set up in a line of business. Yer ain't one to sit down a-doin' naught. There's bad times comes to all on us.' Then Flags turned her face towards the back kitchen, giving a low whistle to attract attention. 'I say, Mother Doo, what's a-going to-night? No more of that cold pig for me. I'm in a mind for something special,

and you may make me pay for it. Bloaters and bread-and-butter for two, if it's all the same to you.'

The royal loftiness of the order was apparently lost on Mrs. Doo.

'Better keep them stray pence o' yourn agin a day as work is slack, Flags. You're too ready to give a feed to an idle tramp.'

If the girl Bell heard that contemptuous 'tramp' she did not wince. Yet she laid a hand on the arm of the needlewoman with a movement to impose silence. But she did not know Flags. When did that nimble tongue ever restrain itself? The only answer she got was a large darning-needle stuck into the back of her hand, as though it were a pin-cushion, a forcible hint to remove it. The light-brown eyes were gleaming savagely in their deep sockets. Flags lifted her small body as high as possible, and a fierce oath fell from her lips—an oath directed towards Mrs. Doo.

'I sha'n't come to you when I goa-begging!' she screamed. 'You'd skin a rat if it died of scurvy!'

Mrs. Doo responded in kind, vociferating curses with great ease. The girl called Bell shivered visibly.

'You don't like our lingo,' said Flags, with a contemptuous laugh. 'It ain't got no special meaning with us; it kinder makes 'em understand better. We've heerd it from the time we was born. Don't yer look so skeery; we don't make no scrimmage.' Mrs. Doo and me, we likes a bit of a jaw, it keeps us lively. Have yer never been in a lodging before?'

The girl hesitated, and in the momentary silence steps were heard. She looked round. At the door leading into the lane stood a couple of low-browed ruffianly vagabonds, apparently riverside loafers, clad in indescribable

garments indicating watery pursuits. They wore oilskin caps and huge boots, and encircling their bloated faces voluminous neckerchiefs were apparent: they were partly protection, partly disguise, for these gentlemen were not partial to recognition outside their own circle. They slouched towards the fire, hands in pockets.

'Hullo, Flags, you jade, so yer've got a pal! 'Tain't every day we sees yer talk to wimmen. We're werry partickler, ain't we, as to character?'

Flags stretched her thread to the utmost, and dabbed her large needle towards the man who spoke.

'Out of prison, Larry! Lord save me, yer've had a short bill this time for kicking a woman. Dan'l O'Flaherty, I'll trouble yer to get out of my light; when I wants a extinguisher, it won't be you I'll ask for. Have ye ever heerd it ain't manners to stare at a lady? What's amiss with her?'

The huge ruffian was bending over the strange girl with a leering smile of approval. Bell had drawn herself against the wall in a shrinking way, with both hands clasped together.

'My stars! what a beauty we've got here! Mother Doo's in luck to find such a lodger. All the single men in Linnet Lane will come to supper for the pleasure of lookin' at yer, my dear. Wheer does yer hail from? T'other side o' the water, I'll go bail. We don't grow 'em so genteel hereabouts.'

The girl remained perfectly still, drawn as far from him as the angle of the wall allowed. Flags watched and waited, feigning to be busy over her task of stitching. The man Daniel stretched out his red coarse hand, and essayed to touch the girl's head. Probably it was meant for a caress. At

the near approach of the rough fingers, the tips of which had no fine touch, Bell stood up from the low stool, and looked with wild appeal towards the needlewoman. Flags, instead of looking an answer, took up her huge scissors, and snipped off a shred with noisy emphasis.

'What a figger-head! O my! —eyes blazing like a rocket, lips as red as cherries, hair as black as coals. Give us a kiss, my beauty. I ain't seen no gal to touch you since I've come out of quod.'

The long arms were stretched straight out towards her. Bell stooped and lifted the poker with incredible swiftness, brandishing it above her head with desperate significance.

Daniel O'Flaherty, accustomed to this implement of warfare, recognised its meaning, and stood back a few paces, a dogged look of baffled rage gleaming in his bloodshot eyes. His companion jeered him as a coward, while Flags, looking up with calm placidity, as though such scenes were not unusual, rapped her thimble approvingly on the table.

'Bless yer, Daniel, it's only her play! Couldn't yer see she was a skittish one? Bell, come and sit alongside of me. I likes sperrit, that I do. He don't look over-nice to kiss, does he? You and me has got better taste nor a dirty Irishman as is stale drunk.'

Happily Mrs. Doo entered at this juncture, and imperatively commanded silence under threat of dismissal.

The men, having paid their money for their lodging, sank into a remote corner, and presently were heard breathing stertorously, overcome, it might be, by fatigue or the fumes of some intoxicating refreshment partaken of round the corner.

The girl Bell relapsed into sul-

len silence after sharing with Flags the meal ordered. She devoured the food set before her in a famished way, which seemed to imply a long abstinence.

Within an hour's time more than a dozen men and women of various types had drifted into the dingy lair. Some of them greeted Flags as an old acquaintance; but her responses to all salutes were curt and condescending. Bell was, without ceremony, required to make room for the new-comers, who pushed and shoved to reach the circle warmed by the fire.

They were an audacious and rowdy lot, firing off maledictions and vile abuse at each other without cessation. All language here was interlarded with oaths and blasphemous expletives. The ornamental adjectives added to the Queen's English were hardly intelligible to the girl Bell, though she at times glanced with a sort of fear at some large-limbed scowling virago, who demanded her to move away.

'Mrs. Doo she's a-growin' mighty genteel,' said one sarcastic young female, who appeared the accepted wit of the circle. 'Got a young lady lodger with trimmings to her dress, and her hair took out of curl-papers. Yer ain't a tuppenny sleeper to come along of us, I'll swear.'

The coarse face was investigating Bell's figure and dress with derision. The girl made no answer, closing her lips tightly.

At eleven o'clock Mrs. Doo tied her head up in a dirty cloth, which did duty for a nightcap, and came in to count the flock. Haply some individual might sneak up-stairs to that loathsome apartment with its straw mattresses, without paying the twopence demanded.

'There's ten on yer wimmen to-night, and only nine on ye can

sleep in the gals' room. I'm not a-goin' to give a single apartment to none on yer for tuppence; I ain't so fond of makin' beds at my time of life. Flags, yer must take one on 'em along of you down-stairs. Yer can pick and choose the honestest or the cleanest.'

A hoarse guffaw greeted this sally. Very small jokes produced merriment here.

Flags sat looking speculatively into the fire. She had folded up her work some few minutes before. As Bell had assisted her in the task, a faint interest had appeared to wake in her.

'What's them?' she said, in an aside, pointing to a little heap of bright-hued patches.

'Materials,' said Flags proudly. 'I'm a mighty useful person, I can tell yer. Why, my flags is floating all over the world, I'll bet.'

'O!' said Bell, at last enlightened; 'they're flags, are they, and you mend them?'

'That's so,' said Flags, nodding, and gathering needles, scissors, cottons, and brass thimbles into her work-box. This was a very ornamental possession, and strangely incongruous with surroundings. Flags never left this cherished possession out of sight. It was made of sandal-wood, with an inlaid border, and had not lost its sweet perfume even in a tainted atmosphere. Flags hugged it fondly to her heart as the mixed crew dispersed slowly to rest. The noise of the men's boots climbing to an attic chamber at last died away. In the room immediately overhead from time to time a hoarse laugh or a muttered curse could be heard. The ceiling was cracked, and the boarding above but thin. Some of the women fell with a dull thud on their mattresses.

Flags had signed to Bell to remain; but she did not speak.

Mrs. Doo came in at last, and raked out the ashes.

'Now, be off with yer, Flags, and take the gal along o' ye. Here's yer dip. Ye won't need me to help yer to-night, as yer've got company.'

Bell did not seem aware that there was anything amiss with Flags, for at this adjuration she looked curiously towards the sofa. Perhaps she expected to see the needlewoman rise. But Mrs. Doo having departed, leaving the dip in a black bottle on the table, Flags continued to stare into the embers, hugging her work-box to her bony breast. Now, with all the encumbering drapery of standards folded up and put away, it was evident what a puny frame belonged to the large head and auburn tresses.

'Have yer done a starin' at me? Is there anythink so mighty peculiar about a gal as has got no legs to speak on? I'm pairylised, as they calls it. They're a pair of bad uns, they are, my legs. Would yer like to see 'em? There was a glimmer of mockery in the eyes of Flags.

'I'm very sorry,' began the girl Bell, with a tremor in her voice.

'Go to blazes! Sorry what for? I'm as good as any other woman. I can earn my living, I can. Here, give a hand, and help me along. Open that door there; that's our cupboard, which Mother Doo she calls a room. I'm a payin' lodger, I am, as has been here livin' reg'lar these seven year. I hope yer don't mind rats a lookin' at yer, and cockroaches a-crawlin' over yer. Don't yer sleep with your mouth open.'

As Bell advanced, Flags had laid hold of a stick from the corner, and, with this prop and Bell's support, reached the little den allotted to them.

* * * *

Six months have gone by since the December night when Bell found a refuge at the Lamb of Goshen. She is a lodger in residence there now, sharing the same apartment as Flags, and paying for her board every Saturday night. Flags, being a knowing young person, bargained for a reduction of rent for two, and, with considerable difficulty and by aid of much strong language, obtained it.

'You are a flat, Bell. You're one o' the sort as is made to be took in. I'm as good as two ornary wimmen, legs or no legs,' she said, with a self-satisfied smirk, on the conclusion of her bargaining. Bell's proceedings with Mrs. Doo were productive of her intense scorn. Yet Flags was in the end induced to admit that Bell was her equal in some ways. She had a clear understanding of comfort and cleanliness, the latter of which by degrees the little needlewoman lent her countenance to. Ingenious devices were adopted by the new lodger to abolish the cockroaches, and the inroads of rats were made difficult by stopping up their holes. The miserable room the pair called their own was, in the course of time, swept and garnished with an approach to decency and order. A small square of looking-glass was hung from the wall, and a brush and comb found their way to a shelf. Even a couple of pegs were knocked into the wall to suspend a hat and extra garments. Mrs. Doo sniffed disdainfully when Bell invested in a scrubbing-brush and broom. As to her practice of making the bed every day, it was beyond contempt.

Yet Flags, who in the outset had been minded also to deride the customs of civilisation, in the course of time was reconciled to the change in the situation.

'The bed are comfortabler,' she admitted; 'and I don't see no harm in having a winder as 'ull open of hot nights.'

She was even ready to contribute her pence towards the expenses of such amendments as Bell was persuaded were benefits. But Flags devoted most of her thoughts to checkmating Mrs. Doo's greed. Her continual scheming was 'to shave Mother Doo.' This veteran campaigner sought naturally on every occasion to impose upon her tenants. It was the instinct of her tribe. A rise in the financial position of any occupant of the Lamb of Goshen ought, of course, to signify an increase of profit to her for her good offices. This, however, Flags was perverse enough not to see, and a continual warfare was waged between the pair. It was self-evident that Flags was of a resisting nature, and would never go to the wall. She sparred valiantly with everything that came in her way. Bell had obtained a situation in a pickle factory, not far off. She had begun with five shillings a week, but now her wages were seven. The increase was difficult to conceal from the astute Mrs. Doo, when a new pair of boots and sundry necessities were added to her wardrobe.

'I sees and I knows,' said this lady, with a sage wink. 'You ain't got no young man as you'll speak a civil word to, and them stockings and that there hat ain't been give to you by any feller. It's that there Flags as has set you agen me, teaching you to rob a lone widder of her fair share.'

A faint whimper proclaimed Mrs. Doo's maudlin mood. Bell only closed her lips more tightly, and made no response to such appeals. Flags knew little more of the history of her companion

than at first. In vain she inquired concerning her past, insinuating artful questions, and laying pitfalls with dexterous skill. Bell was very handsome. Even Linnet Lane, with no cognisance of art, did obeisance to her beauty. Tall and well built, with an erect carriage, she bore her head in a beautiful way. It was a perfect head, shaped classically. The sullen dejected look in her eyes was not so apparent as in the beginning. At first she had avoided going out as much as possible, and had looked about in the streets as though fearful of encountering some one she knew. She spoke but little within the precincts of the Lamb of Goshen, and that little was all to Flags. Towards the lodgers who came and went she was silent and reserved, seeming never to recognise them if they came a second time.

'It don't do to go and set yer-self up so high and mighty, and live in Linnet Lane,' grumbled Flags, with no little reason, one night, as Bell assisted her to undress—a short ceremony: 'that there Jim Dollop as brought them flowers to yer is a decentish chap, and I ain't never heard a word agen him. He has a donkey-cart all to hisself, and hawks flowers and vegetables quite respectable like. Because he've got a squint yer didn't need to be so wicious to the feller for tellin' yer as yer eyes were handsome. Bless yer, I'd say thank you for sich pretty words. Though I'm not for sayin' I ain't got real downright decent friends as thinks there's naught amiss with my eyes too. There's a chap as comes—ah, it don't sinnify.'

Flags, seeing Bell's regard bent curiously upon her, rubbed her chin, and was silent a moment. Then she resumed her former text,

'What did yer flare out like that at Jim when he was doin' his coortin' quite polite? Don't yer mean to marry at no time? Blessed if I don't think yer've got some chap t'other side the water as yer've runned away from in a huff!'

This idle speculation met with no response. The light of a farthing dip did not admit of any observation of a change of colour.

'Now have yer?' said Flags, with husky insinuation, pressing her question home. 'Have yer got some un as yer likes wheer yer come from? I likes a real love-story.'

Bell was sitting near the window, which was propped open with a piece of wood. It was a June evening, and the daylight was slow in dying even here, where hideous walls and roofs did their best to block it out. Though it was ten o'clock, the stars were only slowly twinkling out. A little wandering breeze, that seemed to have strayed from some region more blessed with balmy airs, played about Bell's hair. She was leaning back, with her head raised to the sky.

'Where I came from, Flags, there was no one as loved me.'

The yellow eyes from the bed were watching her with cat-like stealth. The very turn of Bell's head was full of indescribable sadness, to which her voice seemed to answer. Bell was perhaps thinking of a summer evening a year ago, an evening balmy like this, when she had walked in green pastures and plucked sweet wild flowers.

'But was there never no one as you was fond on? It seems onnatural for a gal of your looks not to be thinking of mater-money. No pickle business for me, if I could walk like a queen.'

Bell laid down her head on the sill, and it seemed to Flags that she heard a stifled sob. When Bell spoke again, her voice was faint.

'Yes, Flags, I was fond of some one once; but—but he thought as I didn't care for him, and he went away.'

'He was a damned fool!' said Flags, with decision, raising herself on her elbow and scowling furiously at an imaginary enemy. 'Why didn't yer bring him back?'

Bell turned her face to the stars once more. Her voice trembled, and came in little gasps.

'He—he thought as I wasn't good, as I loved some one else, and he—he said hard words to me; and I couldn't forgive, and we sha'n't never meet again. O, I wish that I was dead!'

Intense interest was visible in Flags' gleaming eyes. Here was a tragedy indeed.

'Whew!' she said, with a long whistle. 'He wur jealous, wur he? And so yer did run away. That's sperrit, maybe; but it wasn't sense to bolt. Kinder looks as if it were true. When he come back, which he'd do sure enough—for them that's jealous always wants to be fed by seein'—he'd be wus sot agen yer than before. Don't yer mean never to go back? I suppose as yours is decent folks; yer've got a comfortable home!'

Bell rose up and came nearer to Flags. She knelt against the bed. Then she stretched out her hand and laid hold of the sandalwood work-box, which Flags invariably placed beneath her pillow.

'The smell of it calls to mind one that I had once. Move it a bit, Flags, where I can't smell at it.' The needlewoman lifted it and placed it at her feet.

'No, dear, I don't ever mean

to go back,' said Bell hoarsely. 'He thought as I were a bad one; and I, who was the faithfulest wi— O Lord, O Lord, it is hard—it is hard !'

'He wur masterful, and you was proud. O, but he wur beef-headed. I'd have punched his canister, that I would, to drive some sense into it. Bell, look 'ere, I'll settle it for yer. Tell us his name.'

But Bell obdurately buried her head in the bed, and no further information was to be gleaned from her.

In the morning, her customary taciturnity prevailed, and no gibes from Flags could produce a syllable of further information. The needlewoman for that day and many days after pondered the tale in her heart. Bell was invested with a new interest by reason of the romance. Flags, without much outward demonstration, cherished a more tender love towards the girl who had drifted across her life, because of her silent endurance.

'She'll be bad to beat for spirit. Lord, he wur a half-baked one! She won't never go back if he hides till kingdom come.'

Flags was radiant, jocose, and conversational one evening, when Bell came home. In a general way, she was tired and silent after the day's work was done. Something had occurred to revive her drooping spirits to-day. She declared her lavish expenditure for the evening meal with exuberance.

'We won't have no weak cat-lap to-night, Bell. The tea on the hob there is made rare and strong—sort of gunpowder, to curl our hair a bit. It has come all the way from Chiny. None of your grocer's sweepings. There's a steak and onions comin', too.

Don't yer smell 'em? I guess Mrs. Doo's eyes is watering.' . . .

Bell stared in amazement, as well she might. Such an extravagant meal had never been spread before, to her knowledge, within the walls of the Lamb of Goshen.

'No, I ain't come into a fortune; but there's a chum o' mine come home from the Chiny Seas, and I means to celerbrate it. He's been to call on me to-day, and bringed a pile of mending. He'll be here agen to-morrow, and I means yer to dress me in bang-up style. 'Tain't every day o' the week as a gentleman o' his sort walks down Linnet Lane. Why, he's first mate on board a schooner. Don't yer think, Bell, as this'—she indicated the billows of her red-gold hair, now brushed and combed into something like brightness—'might be done up like yours in them plaits? It don't seem to have no style now,' she added discontentedly.

Bell, without a smile at the nascent vanity, promised to do her best on the morrow. The tender place in the needlewoman's heart was becoming apparent. That night Bell went out and bought a bit of cheap frilling to sew into the sleeves of the body worn by Flags on Sundays. Flags did not make much account of the skirts which concealed her paralysed limbs.

'Ah, yer'd never think as any chap 'ud come to see the likes o' me. But he is a rare good one to remember folks is Jack; and, bless yer heart, Bell, as handsome a one as ever yer set eyes on.'

Bell started at the name Jack, as she had started before at the mention of the China Seas. After a pause, she said,

'Is he a sailor?'

'Yes, to be sure. None of yer

barge-masters neither, but one as goes to strange countries. It's him as give me the box,' said Flags, with a soft look in her yellow eyes as she fondled the lid of the precious sandal-wood possession. She spoke in a lowered voice, almost as if of a mind to become confidential. Then she looked suspiciously at Bell, and her mood changed. For Bell was looking with wondering pity at her. Flags resented compassion.

'Yer'd wonder now how I come to know such a decent chap. *He* ain't never lodged here, bless yer. We ain't got a room in the Lamb of Goshen good enuf for the likes of him. It are more nor two year since he come here fust to look for a young sailor as had gone on the spree, and as nobody couldn't find. He's a sharp one, is Jack, and he sorter know'd as Linnet Lane was a handy hiding-place. Sure enuf he found him up-stairs with blue devils on him. I was kinder sickly then, and my legs was all draw'd up—they're a sight better now. He spoke a bit to me, and giv' me some coppers, and when he come agen he bringed some flags to mend. Then we set to talkin' a bit, and my! what stories he did tell to cheer me up! I wasn't much good at larfin' then, but my sides was like to bust with his fun. I know'd as he wur well ballasted with cash after he bring'd the box, and I didn't have no fears about takin' more for the mendin' of them flags than from most. And it were grand to think as my work went to Chiny. And it were a Union Jack as I did fust. I ain't ever done thinkin' about it.' Flags mused awhile with a pensive joy, still fondly nursing the sandal-wood lid. 'And now he's come agen after more nor six months' cruise, and he ain't forgotten me.'

The soft light irradiating the yellow eyes made them beautiful. Bell looked sorrowfully at the helpless figure and wan face. The exquisite gleams of love on the features of Flags went to her heart.

'Don't you think, Bell, as I could get down the lane into the main street with my stick and the help o' yer arm?' She paused a second, and a faint blush rose to her brow, while she laughed in an uneasy way. 'I've a sorter fancy to have my likeness took. There's a doorsman to a photygraffer's-shop as is a frind o' mine. He sleeps here in bad times. He tell'd me as they'd take me cheap, as a sort o' advertisement, and hang flags over my head, to sorter sinnify my bizness. My face, it ain't so bad to look at, when I'm polished up a bit; and he did say as my legs weren't no great matter in a photygraff.'

Bell thought the portrait might be achieved, giving no hint that she guessed it was for Jack. She suggested borrowing a little wheel-chair from a woman in the pickle factory, who had a lame child. Then the measure of Flags' content seemed quite full. After they had gone to bed that night, Bell felt the little hands pulling at her in the darkness. In a hoarse croak Flags demanded,

'How 'does sweethearts look, Bell? Does they smile soft at yer, and tell yer funny tales 'bout Chinermen? And when they comes, does they always leave something behind 'em, as though it might be accidental—peppermints, flowers, or a 'lustrated paper?'

Bell said she thought such behaviour might not be impossible amongst sweethearts.

'Did your chap do so?' said Flags, after a long pause and a few soft sighs.

'O don't, O don't!' cried Bell, in a paroxysm of shudders, as

though a sore wound had been touched. Then her hand crept to her bosom, and fingered something that lay hidden there.

A few weeks passed on, and Flags became ever more radiant and jocund of mood. Her toilet arrangements were now an arduous task to the patient Bell, and she left off swearing entirely.

'Me and Mrs. Doo is quite perlite,' she said, with infectious mirth one night, as Bell glanced up surprised at a 'Thank yer, Mother Doo.' Then Flags screwed up her eyes, and spoke in a hoarse whisper through her hands, as though they were a speaking-trumpet. 'He don't like swearin', I sorter fancy. I ain't never heard a ugly word from him.'

Bell felt sorely angry with the man whose gentle kindness to the crippled girl was raising such false hopes in her breast. She almost made up her mind to tell him it would be best to keep away.

After Flags had managed to interview her 'photygraphic' friend, and to get the portrait satisfactorily taken, a restless desire to see more of the outside world seemed to beset her.

'Did yer go to church in them times, afore yer come here, Bell?'

The girl nodded an assent. She was always laconic in reference to former days.

'Jack he goes to church,' said Flags, lifting her eyebrows dubiously. 'I don't rightly know to what shop, and it's too far off, maybe—and I ain't got a Prayer-book; but I sorter think if yer'll borror Lucy's chair to wheel me, I'll go and sit under the cackle-tub in Little Bethel next Sunday. Chapel's better nor naught, I s'pose.'

It was Saturday afternoon, and Flags was making preparations to visit the chapel on the next morn-

ing, as Bell knew. Bell came home early from the factory on this day; but she lingered on the way to purchase the trimmings for a hat already in the possession of Flags. Twopennyworth of cheap lace, and a fourpenny rose of brilliant hue, would be a satisfactory investment, no doubt, to the needlewoman, who had instructed her friend.

'I should like summat bright and light and airy—a feather or a flower—as 'ull make a good show for my money.'

Linnet Lane was very quiet at midday. No viragos stood at the doors or emptied refuse into the gutters, and the voices of children were heard not. Small fry did not abound in this alley. Little humanities imply a residential population. Stray passengers wandered here chiefly at night, and beyond a skulking bargee and a wharfman reeling out of a public-house, Bell met no one in the alley. The few residents were probably engaged over their mid-day meal. The door of the Lamb of Goshen stood half open, rather to Bell's surprise. She knew that Mrs. Doo had gone across the water for the day, and she was generally cautious in the closing of her habitation before her departure. Perhaps Flags had a customer doing business with her. As Bell drew nearer she heard voices within. For a moment she stood in the doorway shading her eyes, partially blinded by the glare of the August sun outside. There was a man inside, holding a cheery altercation with Flags. Between them they stretched out a dilapidated standard of large dimensions. This was no unusual sight, for Flags always thoroughly inspected the work intrusted to her, bargaining stiffly for every patch and darn. The pair were too fully engaged to notice Bell at once. In a

moment she had regained her sight. She saw that the visitor was a respectable seafaring man, with curly yellow hair. The Jack from the China Seas, of course. Yet the sight of the broad shoulders and blue serge suit seemed to turn Bell suddenly faint. She stretched out her hand to support herself against the door, while her beautiful eyes had a wildly startled look. She seemed paralysed by some unlooked-for catastrophe.

'Now, Jack, none o' that! Don't yer go for to gammon me as this is a easy job. I never did put a needle in a wuss bizness. It 'ull cost yer nigh on a shilling to make him fit to fly. Them ty-fools (typhoons) seems to make small account o' British ensigns, 'cording to the lot you've bring'd.'

The man laughed audibly at this novel interpretation of a typhoon.

An indescribable sound in the doorway caused the pair of disputants to look round. It was but the sharp click of Bell's teeth. A stony pallor had crept over her face, and her eyes were distended. For a second no one spoke. The man's face was turned away from Flags, who could not see the look of ghastly fear upon it. With a condescending wave of one hand, she proceeded to introduce the sailor. There was a strange new light to be noticed in the needle-woman's lambent yellow eyes, and there was a husky softness in her voice, so full of pleased vanity.

'This 'ere feller is Jack Martin, as I tell'd yer on. He's jest home from the Chiny Seas. Bein' a pertickler friend o' mine, I hopes, Bell, as yer'll be civil to him.'

'God Almighty!' broke from the man, with a sort of suppressed groan.

Flags had never heard him swear before.

Bell came forward in a ghostly gliding way, without glancing at the stranger. She gave no sign of having observed him, or having heard her friend's introductory remarks.

'I've brought you the trimmings, Flags,' she said, in a hard strained voice, laying down the paper bag on the table. 'I think I'll go out again a bit, while you settle your business with your friend.'

She turned at once and passed out swiftly, not listening to the expostulations hurled after her, though the echoes of a shrill voice seemed to pursue her down the lane. Bell had not reached the end of its winding way—the end towards the river—before she heard a rapid step following her. She did not look round, for she knew it was vain to hasten now. That quick tread had been a familiar one in brighter days. Her intention had been to escape in one of the boats moored at the wharfside, but now she was cut off from them. When she reached the wharf she leaned, breathless and tottering, against some wooden cases piled up there. There were no loafers or bargees about. As the quick steps rounded the corner of her shelter, she lifted her head bravely. The man came near to her.

'Bell' he said fiercely. A cloud of sullen defiance settled on her brow; she met the blue eyes fixed on her with steady resistance. There was no shame on her face; there was nothing that he expected to see.

'My God! have you sunk to this?' he said, glancing down at her, noticing her work-stained hands, her ragged dress, which patches hardly held together.

She made no reply.

'You that was so neat and smart, the handsomest craft in our waters! Did he forsake you?

Speak to me, woman, or by the Almighty I'll—'

She looked at him with the same sullen defiant gaze, but her lips parted now.

'Throw me into the river. Ay, do; I've not dared to do it myself in all the time of my misery!'

He recoiled a little at her dogged determined tone. The desperate calm of her voice was mocked by her beautiful dark eyes, full of a bewildering woe.

'Did he leave you—the black-guard!—so soon?' he said, while the steely gleam of his blue eyes seemed to cut her.

'*He?*' The intense scorn of a human voice could do no more with one little word. Yet it did not carry denial to incredulous ears. She gasped a moment for breath. 'There never was no he,' she said, in a cold stern way.

'Curse you, Bell—you lie!'

He lifted his arm, as if about to strike the girl to the ground. The undisguised flames of mingled love and jealousy shot out of his eyes. It seemed doubtful whether he would lift her and hurl her into the river or seize her in a mad embrace. He did neither. When he spoke again his voice was broken by husky sobs, 'Lord, have mercy upon me!'

As he lost control of himself, she seemed to grow stronger.

'You took the words of them others against mine. You believed what folks said; you would not listen to me; you thought that I was false because you saw me walking with a strange man, but—'

He made a fierce gesture for her to be silent.

'Don't go on with them lies. You run away and left your home, and these six months that I've been gone you've never been heard or seen.'

He passed his hand over his

face. She dropped her eyes from his.

'You accused me wrong,' she said doggedly.

'Accused you wrong! O Lord, when I see you out walking with a strange man late at night, a-hangin' on his arm, and talking familiar-like! Yes, they did tell me as he'd been to see you many a night when I was at sea, and that they'd heard you speak loving words to him, and—'

The girl drew herself up with proud determination, with no vestige of shame even yet. He prevented her speaking.

'Avast there, you brazen woman! Does them that's respectable go tramping about with a man of that character when she's left to herself? What's come of him? Speak, you jade, or by God I'll make you!'

He laid his strong brown hand upon her arm, but she did not wince beneath its cruel clutch. Yet he forced words from her. To him they seemed words of exculpation.

'He's in prison,' she said slowly. Tears fell down her face and dropped upon his hand. A wild fierce laugh of triumph broke from the sailor.

'Ay, that's what's come of him, is it? An' you're waiting till he comes out. I'll listen to you now, Bell. Them words has got the brand of truth on them. Woman, how strange you look! God have mercy, the only face I can't forget! Many's been the wild night at sea when I've seen it looking white and angry, never with the loving smile as when we were courting. No, no, I can't never take you back, Bell! But listen, girl. I'll make you an allowance to keep you from want, so as you don't need to work, if you'll come out of this slum. You that was so nice and delicate

about your ways, almost a lady; you that had such a love for pretty trumpery, living in Linnet Lane along of thieves and gaul-birds!

She held resolutely away from his firm grasp, not struggling, but steadily resisting.

'Let me go!' she said. 'I'm earning an honest living, and doing no one no harm. I'll be beholden to no one that thinks I would do wrong.'

He let her go. A backward wave of maddening jealousy swept over him.

'Ah, so the fellow will be out of prison soon! Go to hell, then, along with him! Curse you! curse you! You've blasted my life, and I'll never see you no more!'

He strode off, leaving her weak and gasping. Once she made a step forward, as if to call him back; but some after-consideration restrained the yearning, and she fell, shuddering, against the wall of wooden cases.

When Bell, late in the afternoon, returned to the Lamb of Goshen, Flags had a hectic tinge on her pale cheeks, and her mood was hilarious. Her discordant shrieks of laughter made a horrible music in the den she called home. She idled away the afternoon with a dirty pack of cards, pretending to tell fortunes. Bell noticed at once that a smell of gin pervaded the atmosphere, never too redolent of sweetness. Flags had fallen back on a former consolation. Her fitful indulgence in stimulants had been abandoned altogether in the past months. The poison had been obtained somehow to-day. There were always people coming and going, ready to bring it to Flags.

'Aha, my beauty, so we've come at last!' she said, in greeting to the pale woman who entered

with exhausted mien. 'Wanted a private interview, didn't we, now? Had a nice walk by the riverside along of our young man, in coorse. I 'opes yer didn't pitch him in the river. So he's your chap as didn't make no account of yer. He ain't much eye for a beauty, now, have he? I know'd as yer come of decent folks, but I didn't have no notion as yer were up to the mark of Jack Martin. Mother Doo, come and listen. If Bell here hasn't a-been settin' her cap at our swell from Chiny! See how down in the mouth she's a-lookin' because he ain't pleased to see her in sich low company! I'll send round the corner for a drop to cheer yer, Bell. O, I'm your friend, in coorse. Gin neat is the ticket to put sperrit in yer.'

There was something fiendishly derisive about the needlewoman's mood. She turned suddenly, and charged Mrs. Doo with a volley of almost forgotten oaths for making a clatter with the plates. The elderly virago took up the challenge, and there ensued a terrific duel of words of horrible significance in Bell's ears, though carrying little weight with the combatants.

She stood, sick and trembling, not daring to interfere, while the infuriated Flags hurled her blasphemy, varying it with demoniacal laughs. Finally, Mrs. Doo getting the best of it in vituperative speech, the needlewoman, in mad rage, took up her precious work-box and hurled it at her retreating foe. The sandal-wood fell, splintering, tossing far and near thimbles, cotton, and scissors. A silence, for a moment, followed. Flags appeared sobered by her own desperate deed. She sat glaring at her outraged treasure, hardly realising the magnitude of her sacrilege.

'Pick it up,' she said, in a faint croak, to Bell, with an imperative wave of her hand. 'No; curse you, leave it alone!' she said, suddenly changing her mood.

She stretched for her stick and stood up against the wall, with slow and arduous efforts creeping round to where the box lay. Here she fell upon the ground, and sobbed and moaned as she gathered up the fragments. Then the wretched needlewoman suffered Bell to help her to rest without further demur.

Bell had grown to love Flags. Her heart, in its desolation, had clung to the girl who depended on her help, and in return, as well as she could, shielded her from coarse surroundings. The better nature of the needlewoman had come to the surface, and Bell cherished the spark of womanliness and tenderness which had not gone out utterly beneath such adverse winds. Would the old habits and tastes be reasserted now? Had Flags broken loose from the constraints of decency? Was the yearning for respectability quenched by the might of her desperate jealousy? For Bell intuitively guessed, how it was with her. She divined instinctively the anguish that had been at work in the soul of Flags this day. A despairing conviction had been brought home to her that Jack's attentions were pure kindness. No soft lights came and went in the pale-brown eyes. The pretty auburn hair, dishevelled and tangled, was tossed wildly about. As Bell watched and listened, she felt that all the good in Flags had been scathed. She was more devil than woman in her mood this night. She tossed about in her bed, breaking out from time to time in snatches of ribald songs; she seemed to defy Bell's presence; she jeered

at her, reviled her in vain. No answer came.

'Yer a pretty one to keep things dark! Why couldn't yer say as yer know'd my Jack? O, don't yer never fear—he won't come back. Jack he's a smart one, and he'll go and take up with a Princess Chinywoman. Yer've been and gone and done for yerself by running into a low lodging.' A cackle of enjoyment broke from the bed: 'Yer've hanged yerself, yer've hanged yerself!'

Bell sat in her silent despair seated at the window through the livelong night. She watched the stars rise and set, and only longed for her own life to set with them.

The next morning Flags was weak and sick. She no longer swore or spoke. When Bell brought her tea she drank it with feverish thirst, and suffered herself to be assisted to her usual seat on the sofa. She vouchsafed no answer to Bell's questions; and so it went on for three days, within which three days something occurred which appeared to give Flags intense satisfaction. It was only a visitor who called for Bell, and took her out for a walk.

Within a week Jack Martin came to fetch his flags. They were all ready for him, tied up in an illustrated newspaper.

'Is your friend Bell still living here?' he said curtly to Flags, not sitting down.

She looked at him out of the corners of her eyes, answering,

'O yes; she's a reg'lar lodger.'

'How long has she been here?'

Flags made a feint of reflection.

'Let me see, it wur afore Christmas, I knows—might be a couple o' weeks after yer went to Chiny. She are rare good company, she are. The lodgers they

flocks in after her—male kind, in course. Why, she's a sort o' advertisement to the Lamb o' Goshen.'

The fitful gleams in the eyes of Flags were dangerous. She snapped at her thread with her teeth to bite it off.

'Has she got followers—sweet-hearts—then? She's got some respectable folks that would like to hear of her,' he said, in a sort of apologetic way.

'Trust her! sheals on'em. Why, o' Saturday night the door is blocked wi' 'em a-wantin' to treat her right and left; lives like a princess, she do.'

The man breathed heavily. Flags sniffed the air derisively.

'Is there any particular one here that she favours?' he said, bringing out the words with difficulty. 'It's all in the way of friendship to them that belongs of her that I'm asking.'

Flags winked openly, giving a little elfish screech of significance.

'You, you duffer, in course there is! Why, this werry arternoon she's gone out along of him—a chap with black eyes, and hair as looks as if it had shook hands with gaol-scissors. He ain't a pretty one, and I do wonder at her taste. He've been hangin' about the Lamb of Goshen these three days to get a word with her. Looked in at the window, he did, and struck her all of a heap when he come in at the door. I never did see no one look so queer. I guess it wur a joyful surprise to Bell.'

Nothing could have equalled the fiendish malice expressed on the crippled girl's face. She stretched out her thread, and made a playful dab at the sailor with her needle.

'Ah, go 'long with yer! 'Tain't no use lookin' so glum. Go to

Chiny, and look for a princess with them feet as 'ull go into a egg-cup. She won't have naught to say to you. I'll go bail she makes game on you with that feller. Why, she tell'd me about yer months ago, oney she didn't name yer. I reckon she don't account that curly hair and them gilt buttons o' yourn as so much value as black eyes and flash weskets wi' gold chains.'

Then Flags fell to laughing violently, holding her hands to her sides as in a paroxysm of delicious mirth.

The man leaned against the wall. His face was ashy white. Beneath clenched teeth he spoke thickly.

'Good-bye, Flags,' he said slowly. Then he advanced a step, holding out his hand. 'Poor little woman, I'm sorry for you! You are perhaps better than your companions here. Say good-bye, for you will never see me again.'

She stretched her small body upwards, withdrawing her hand behind her back. She avoided meeting his glance.

'Why, I knows you ain't took in yer cargo so slick. Yer'll come agen before yer sails to Chiny. It don't make no matter about bringing flags to mend; I've lots o' work nowadays.'

There was a sort of repressed eagerness about her. She knew her slanderous tongue had gone too far, that she had overshot her mark.

'I think not,' he said gently, with the extreme gentleness of one who is mortally wounded at heart. He added, with a sickly smile, 'You know I've got your photograph to remember you by.'

She did not look satisfied. There was an unknown mist before her yellow eyes.

'And the flags as well,' he said still more gently; 'whenever I

see them flying at the masthead I shall remember your clever fingers.'

She laid her head on the table before her. She had gone back to her old untidy way of wearing her hair, not suffering Bell to touch her. The ruddy billows were lavishly displayed.

'Jack, if I was to die before you come agen, would yer remember me always? You hev been good to me, and I've been on-grateful—more nor yer knows. I've tell'd lies many a time; but don't yer think as I'm sorry—I'd tell 'em agen this minnit; but maybe if you was to find out, yer'd curse me.' For a moment she was silent, and then she tossed her head upwards, and laughed in that pitiful way that had no mirth. 'Say good-bye, and hook it,' she said; 'I'm not in full feather to-day. It's all gammon about them lies. I say, Union Jack, don't union mean maternmoney? I've seed in the papers, "Union in high life"'—he started away from her—'about the swells, yer know, when they gets tied up. A chap as come here last week he were a-askin' after Union Jack, and then he sed as it were Jack Martin he sinnified. But you ain't no Union Jack, though they calls yer so. Ha, ha! you'd be a fool to get spliced! There ain't no union for you yet awhile. Good-bye! Don't yer bring yer Chiny princess to Linnet Lane; it's kinder rough walking for them as has no feet to speak on.'

He was out of hearing. The desperate defiant crest lowered itself. Down, down sank Flags. Sobs heavy and choking broke from her. Soon the standard in her hands was soaked with the bitter, bitter tears of a hopeless love.

Linnet Lane in winter-time was

a melancholy haven of rest. Its ways were dark and slippery, and the all-devouring fog crept up from the river to feed on its rottenness. A yellow atmosphere mantled over the dismal dwellings, and lent a new horror to their cheerless fireless condition. The penetrating breath of these raw mists chilled the wretched denizens of courts and yards to the bone. If you would know what fogs in our great city are like, it is only required of you to pass a few November days within such purlieus as Linnet Lane. The horrors of Dante's hell can only be likened to the misery which has its home here; for verily the sharpest pains of hell do take hold of wretched dwellers in such corners of the earth.

Could it be wondered at that the admittance of any outside air was regarded as a treachery to life within the Lamb of Goshen? Nooks and crannies were stuffed with rotten rags, and crevices in windows and doors pasted over with bits of paper. All expedients were sought to cherish warmth. The close proximity of many bodies, the rank smell of cheap tobacco, were no disadvantages. A noisome effluvium was not to be compared with the damp and rawness which, entering in, caused aching bones and chattering jaws and pulseless limbs.

Six months have again gone by, and on this wintry night the wind blows clouds of driving mist up from the river. But the Lamb's inside arrangements are tempered to resist the wind. There is gathered together in the familiar room a crew of motley wretchedness—a wretchedness which it hardly seems aware of, as it makes merry in the firelight, and swears and gibes and slanders with unadulterated viciousness. Dock-labourers, half-drunk some of

them, squat smoking on the floor; blowsy-faced women, with no vestige of feminine appearance remaining to them; wenches, strong-limbed and hearty; girls still young in years, but old in knowledge of crime and wickedness; ay, children even—are harboured in this den. One child, known familiarly as 'Little Ben,' shares the honour of general attention with Flags. The little boy, preternaturally grave, is of a wizened appearance, and sings and dances in a droll way for the amusement of the company.

The history of this 'Little Ben' remains to be told hereafter.

Flags is strangely altered. It is not alone that she is more emaciated and sickly-looking, that her eyes gleam from deeper sockets, that her hands are transparently thin. There is besides some spiritual transformation evident. She is quiet. She even covertly caresses 'Little Ben' when he leans against her sofa to take breath. The general conversation appears not to interest her as she bends over her work. The sharp retort, the coarse wit, are things of the past from her lips; yet her alert ears catch every murmur of her name.

'What's amiss with Flags, Mother Doo?' said one of the men, in a gruff aside. 'She looks about ready for the cold cook. Damme, yer've been starving of her, old skinflint!'

Mrs. Doo in vain vociferated a lusty denial of the aspersion, swearing she had been out of pocket for months on account of the dainties purchased to tempt the failing appetite of her lodger. She continued:

'It's my belief as she's fretting along of that good-for-naught Bell. That gal she took the huff one day as high and mighty as a duchess, all along of that black-

eyed gaol bird as I sed weren't a respectable chap to be hanging about the Lamb in daylight; and she that soft, a-letting him bleed her of her earnings. There warn't no new clothes or hextrys here after he got wind of her.'

The man took no notice apparently of this explanation, elbowing his way past a couple of hulking women nearer to the sofa, where Flags sat enthroned after her wont. As she had faded and wasted, something of nerve-power seemed miraculously to have revived. Her paralyzed limbs had regained a small degree of vigour. She could stand on one leg now, and creep round the room by the aid of a crutch which had been given her. More than once she had been seen hobbling down the lane, and she would stand at the door of the Lamb of Goshen frequently on bright days. Her industry and energy appeared to wear her out. Her needle rested not night or day, and her customers were even more numerous. She began to charge extra half-pennies. Mrs. Doo at this juncture was well aware that Flags was putting by pence every week. She did not take the trouble to resolve the reason of a suddenly developed avarice. If anything happened to Flags—a probability Mrs. Doo contemplated complacently—in default of testamentary injunctions this lady had made up her mind that the real and personal estate of her lodger would be her property.

'Ain't I been like a mother to her?' she said in justification to her own conscience, when the thought of appropriation of the little canvas bag under the mattress in the back room appeared to have a hue of theft.

'Hullo, Flags, my girl, so yer dark-eyed baggage has give you the slip!' said the navy who had

brought Mrs. Doo to book for malpractices.

Flags looked up quickly. The rest of the company were fully engaged with Little Ben's horn-pipe. There was a shade of entreaty in the hollow eyes.

'Joe,' she said breathlessly, reading his face, 'do you know what's come on her? I druv her to it; it was me as said bad things to her. Maybe she's drowneded herself.'

The man rubbed a stubbly beard of a week's growth.

'No, it ain't as bad as that. I can tell yer in a jiffy more than yer knows about her. There was a pal of mine as slep' here one night, and sailed arterwards to the Chiny Seas along o' Union Jack. He know'd all about her. She were a well-plucked one, and she ain't never give in. That there Bell she come down here because she run away from her home. She wur Jack Martin's wife, and—'

Like a python springing, Flags rose up suddenly to face the man. The tawny mane lifted itself like an angry crest. Terrible gleams shot out of the dulled eyes. Through her thin white lips Flags seemed to hiss,

'His wife! Bell!'

The low concentrated mingling of anguish and amazement did not impress the man. This bleary-eyed navy only shook his head with an affirmative oath.

'Sure as hell-fire burns. He were mortal jealous, for she were a rare beauty to look at. He wouldn't never ask no questions straight out when he come back from sea and found the neighbours talking. She sot her back up and left him as soon as he spoke to her. After a bit it come out as him as they thought she were making too free with were her brother as had been lagged,

and as she'd never spoke of for shame to Jack. She lived along of him when she bolted from here; but he served her a bad turn, broke her skull, and now she lies in the workhouse over there, and he's got a pretty time to do.'

Flags grew ghastly pale as the recital went on. She clutched the framework of her sofa, lifting her glance to a Union Jack which she had fashioned daintily and fixed like a picture against the wall beside her seat.

'What's come on him?' she said, in her hoarsest whisper. 'Ain't he back from Chiny?'

The man grunted, 'Ay, a month gone. His ship it's in dock for bottom repairs. I s'pose he's living t'other side the water.'

Flags stretched out her hand, a hand so thin and transparent that the man hardly felt its light touch.

'Joe, I've been a good friend to you at times; yer can do me a kind turn now. Bring me word where Union Jack hangs out.'

Have you ever been in the hospital of a workhouse? These sick-wards are much the same, I fancy, all over the country, though there are distinctive types amongst the inhabitants thereof in certain localities. A most ancient fish-like smell pervaded the atmosphere of the workhouse not far from the riverside. Here superannuated bargees, the wives of dock-labourers, and many who found their bread on the waters were taken finally to end their inglorious days. It is possible that those who are born in the purple, who go softly and fare delicately, cannot picture what this final home and resting-place is like. For those who have never seen it, is it indeed easy to realise the bare desolation of a long narrow ward, with bare boards and roughly-whitewashed

walls, dull windows blocked in by higher buildings beyond, and naught for the weary eyes to rest upon that so much as suggests an outside world full of cheerful activities and happy life! The rows of beds on either side of the ward are close together, and contain for the better part the worn-out bodies of palsied paupers. This is the resting-place for aching bones, for dim eyes, for human machinery out of gear, to be repaired at the expense of the country. On God's earth there is no sadder sight than the hospital of a large workhouse. Come with me. Do not listen to those awful curses of that delirious girl; close your eyes as you go past the rows of blear-eyed crones, the mouthing harridans grown old and toothless, but not reverend, with their gray hairs.

Bell is lying here in a distant corner. She is on a fair way to recovery now. She had fallen sick after leaving the hospital—sick of privation when work was not to be had. Some ruffian had assaulted her, and a fall on the pavement had produced concussion of the brain. They had taken her to the hospital, where she had lain insensible for weeks, and from thence drifted hither. It was a visitors' day at the workhouse; but Bell had no friends to come and see her. Her eyes rested languidly on the high window through which she could see a bit of sky. Life was coming back to her slowly. A senile crone lay in the next bed to her, gibbering at a shadow that flickered on the wall. They had cut off Bell's beautiful hair. What need for such adornment upon a pauper head?

The half-drowsy unconsciousness of weakness was upon her. She heard the door opening, heard people come and go, and sounds

of sobs afar off. That was a frequent sound on visiting days. A young Irishwoman was keening prematurely, with all the ardour of her nation. The venerable subject of her grief was still sufficiently alive to receive contraband goods. Bell did not notice the stump of a crutch all the length of the ward. Her beautiful eyes only dropped from the high window when a hoarse croak sounded in her ears—a croak once familiar.

'Bell! O Bell!'

It was Flags; but a Flags so altered and shrunk, so pale and mournful, that she seemed a new person.

'Put me on the bed, will yer?' she said huskily to the pauper-nurse, who accompanied her.

'Now yer not to go upsetting the pore thing. She's mending beautiful; and she's a real respectable one, I can tell ye,' said this woman, with objection.

Flags waved her hand contemptuously.

'I knows more nor yer can tell of her.'

Then she nestled closer to the sick girl. Bell's eyes inquired what it all meant.

'I'm a-going to take yer away, Bell, as soon as yer's well enough. Won't yer never forgive me? I knows now how it all is.'

Then she burst into a paroxysm of tearless sobs.

'You're his wife—and he—was your brother!'

Bell lifted herself upon her elbow. She drew the frail figure into a close embrace, stroking the great mass of waving hair. Speech came slowly.

'It looked bad, Flags, when I run away from the Lamb of Goshen. But Tom he made me swear that I'd not let out to none who he was; and I couldn't bear that all should think bad of me.

I stayed awhile with him, and he began to ill-use me. They turned me away from the factory because he hung about continual. He was drunk one night; he struck me, and I was taken to the hospital; then afterwards I came here.'

Flags hid her face resolutely in the pillow. She panted heavily.

'Flags, how did you know I was here?'

The trembling answer was broken with heartrending sobs.

'I've know'd it a month gone. There's been them as has kept watch on yer. Now I'm a-goin' to set things—straight. You and me can't never be friends no more. I tell'd lies to him—to Jack—that he won't never forgive.'

A fortnight later, the reception-room at the Lamb of Goshen was swept and garnished as much as circumstances admitted. This had been done after Mrs. Doo's departure early in the morning. This lady had gone across the water on one of her periodical journeys. Report declared that she spent such holidays doing court to a hulking bargee, who avoided the pitfalls and snares laid at the Lamb of Goshen. 'The lone widder' had a mind to seek a partner.

Flags had on her Sunday body, and her face and hands were washed. A small bunch of violets stood in a cup on the table, exhaling a most unusual sweetness here, and a roaring fire filled the grate. Evidently Flags had been dipping into the canvas bag. It seemed that the needlewoman was expecting a visitor; for she had laid her work on one side, and appeared to listen for the approach of a step outside. Stray beams of light had pierced the curtain of fog this morning.

They even wandered in at the window, and played about the head of Flags.

'Come in,' she said weakly, in answer to a tap at the outside door. It was Jack Martin who unlatched it. A moment a smile irradiated the girl's face, and then instantly faded.

'What ails you, Flags? Have you been ill? They did not tell me. The woman only said that you needed to see me to-day. Poor little creature! so you sent for me!'

The gentle pity stung her with an indescribable pain.

'Stay,' she gasped, as he drew near; 'don't yer touch me, least-aways not yet—not till I knows as yer can forgive me.'

A great solemnity shone in her eyes.

'I've been wickeder than yer knows. The last time as I seed yer I telled yer a pack of lies about that there gal—that Bell.'

The man staggered a step backwards. An inarticulate sound broke from his lips. Flags, not looking at him, went on desperately with her story. Her voice was choked by the words of atonement. She lifted her thin hands to her face, as though for very shame of its distress. The tears trickled slowly through her fingers.

'She never did speak to none of the men while she wur here, nor not so much as look at 'em. She wur allus honest and well behaved. They all sorter know'd as she come of better folks. He—that chap as I spoke on—the black-eyed brute as follered her, has been lagged agen for nigh murdering of her; he—he was—her brother!'

The man started forward, and fell on his knees at the feet of Flags. His cap fell off, and his curly head bent before her. He was

so near to her, almost touching her. She shivered as she looked down at the crisp gold curls she had loved so well.

'Is it true—her brother? O my God! And I never knew she had one! I would not believe her simple words; and now—now we are naught to each other. She that was so proud will never forgive.'

The door of the back room creaked a little. Flags conquered the bitter anguish of her momentary weakness. She looked over the man's head, and made a sign to some one within the aperture. Then she rose softly, and, with the aid of her crutch, moved gently away from the stricken sailor.

The door of the bedroom closed without a sound behind her. The man remained with bowed head, unconscious of her departure.

'Bell—my Bell! Lord, have mercy! Never mine no more!' he groaned.

A soft breath played over his curls, a hot tear fell on his neck, a low voice breathed with passionate joy,

'Jack, Jack, I am here! O my Jack, come back to me! Husband, I forgive—your Bell—yours for always now!'

When Flags returned after awhile, she found the pair seated on her sofa—on the couch of much pain and remorse and many bitter tears—verily now the throne of her glory. A serene peace had come to Flags. The creases on her brow were smoothed away,

her golden-brown eyes were dewy, her voice subdued and robbed of all harshness. Jack had at that moment removed the wedding-ring from the ribbon round Bell's neck, and was about to replace it on her finger.

The needlewoman's lips parted with a sorrowful smile. She looked only at the man, as she said very softly,

'Ay, it is *Union Jack* now!'

The exquisite tenderness of the words sounded like a blessing in Bell's ears.

For many years Flags continued to live and labour at the Lamb of Goshen. Jack, in his profuse gratitude and tender pity, offered her a home beneath his own roof. But Flags declined it curtly. The sailor was inwardly surprised that Bell, bearing the girl, as he knew, a tender love, did not join in his invitation.

As years went on, Flags became a notorious influence for good in Linnet Lane. Her power was wide and deep upon the shores of crime and infamy. The first steps out of the slough of degradation had been toilsome enough; but her eyes had looked upon a 'beyond,' her ears had been unstopped to the voices which cry 'Come up higher,' and she did not harden her heart against the better influences. To the end of her days Flags was a valiant standard-bearer, carrying the colours she had chosen right under the enemy's guns in a domain where Philistines are dangerous adversaries.

HENRY KING.

A DERANGEMENT OF EPITAPHS.

By F. BAYFORD HARRISON.

WE quote Mrs. Malaprop in a literal sense, which that good lady did not intend her famous speech to bear; and we must premise that the genuineness of all the following inscriptions cannot be vouched for; those only of which the exact locality is named has it been possible to verify. The others must be taken for what they are worth.

To the present writer, arriving with a friend at Lancaster late on a November afternoon, a walk through the town suggested itself as the best means of employing the time before the very good dinner provided at the County Hotel could be ready.

The parish church, like most parish churches, obtruded itself on the strangers; they went into the churchyard and looked about them. The doors of the sacred building were closed, and the tombs around did not offer much that was interesting; but on a flat stone near the path was the one word 'Par.' On the large slab was no notice that it was in memory of, or that it covered the remains of, 'Par,' whoever he might be, but simply the one word; and we thought it a peculiar way of spelling a common-enough name, generally written *Parr*. But there are many eccentricities even among tombs, and plenty of material for the meditations of a Hervey, be he serious or humorous. On the very next stone, also horizontal, was again a single word—'Kin.' This puzzled us even more than the previous in-

scription; but we finally came to the conclusion that beneath the second stone lay the *kin*, or *kith*, or *relatives* of the deceased Parr or Par. He, or those who erected this memento of him, being evidently averse to many words, had only engraved above his relatives the simple fact that they were his kin. It might be that the Parr family were so well known in Lancaster that no further memorial was needed of their resting-place. Or perhaps his relatives derived their sole claim to notice from their connection with the illustrious Par, of whom we south-country people had never before heard. But a third flat stone renewed our bewilderment. On it too was one word of three letters, like the former words—'Son.' This, in some degree, explained the other epitaphs, if they can be so called. Not only were the lamented Par and various relatives lying beneath our feet, but also his son, doubtless his only son, to whom a place was assigned, not with the other kin, cousins, uncles, brothers, but for this nearest and dearest a separate grave had been reserved. And there was something pathetic in the picture conjured up of the old man Par laid to his long rest, followed by many of his kin, and lastly by his one child, his son.

Nothing was wanting to this simple dignity of epitaph; but it was rudely overthrown by the exclamation, 'Parkinson!' Alas, the edifice of romance and pathos fell to the ground; these three

stones only covered the burying-place of a family rejoicing in the ordinary name of Parkinson.

The Lancastrian romance having degenerated into decided prose, we will now search for some poetry in the county of Kent. The very pretty neighbourhood of Sevenoaks supplies several curious epitaphs. In the church of Sevenoaks is an inscription, without date, in memory of a widow:

'Here lies her dust whom second love
Never could to marriage move;
But did see longe a widdow tarrie,
Till that Christ her soule did marrie.
Thusse I cannot say she's dead,
But to an heavenly husbände wed.'

It is a moot point whether continuance in widowhood be a testimony to the merits or the faults of the late lamented; whether his good qualities inspired such affection that the widow could know no second love; or whether his bad qualities made her fear a repetition of them in No. 2. A gentleman of Chevening, near Sevenoaks, appears to have had a decided opinion on this point, for above his grave we read:

'In my youth pleasure I did see,
And when I married none for me;
When God calls I am willing to obey,
No longer in this wicked world to stay.'

This is very candid; but it is outdone in frankness by an elegy which is said to be, or to have been, in Stepney churchyard:

'My wife she's dead, and here she lies,
There's nobody laughs, and nobody cries;
Where she's gone, and how she fares,
Nobody knows, and nobody cares.'

Equally wanting in affection and politeness are the lines said to have been written by Dryden, on his wife; they are also wanting in poetic merit, though they possess the charm of brevity:

'Here lies my wife—here let her lie;
She's now at rest, and so am I.'

The same idea, expressed in prose, is reported from a church

near Ilfracombe. It is over a man's grave:

'He died in peace. His wife died first.'
As a rider on this last remark, that he died in peace, it is worth while to tell how affectionate parents who had lost twins desired to say something similar, and commissioned the local stonemason to prepare the inscription. The approbation of the Rugby Burial Board was necessary; but it was not accorded to

'Their end's was peace.'

Judging by our specimens of churchyard poetry, it would appear that either most married women are unpleasant in home-life, or that most married men are inappreciative of the treasures which sparkle at their firesides. It is quite a rare thing to find a laudatory epitaph on a wife, and too great prominence cannot be given to one which is on a stone in the old cemetery at Exeter. It was composed by a Mr. Tuckett; he was a tallow-chandler, and presumably not all unused to the melting mood. His lines are very melting:

'Here lies a Wife, a Friend, a Mother,
I believe there never was such another;
She had a head to earn, and a heart to
give,
And many poor she did relieve.
She lived in virtue, and in virtue died,
And now in Heaven she doth reside.
Yes! it is true as tongue can tell,
If she had a fault it was loving me too
well.
And when I am lying by her side,
Who was in life her daily pride,
Tho' she's confined in coffins three,
She'd leave them all and come to me.'

And yet one has misgivings. Why did Mr. Tuckett confine his wife in coffins three? Why did he erect a threefold barrier between his wife's dust and his own? After his death, Mr. Tuckett's relatives removed his extraordinary composition, and erected a commonplace memorial.

The following lines give a more

certain sound, and are more satisfactory. It is one of the few epitaphs written by a widow for her husband, and is in the burying-ground of St. Philip's Church, Birmingham :

' O cruel Death, how cou'd you be so unkind

To take him before and leave me behind?
You should have taken both of us, if either,

Which would have been pleasing to the survivor.'

The reader will notice not only a most ingenious rhyme, but also an entanglement of idea, which seems to point to a Milesian origin. No matter whence it comes, one is truly glad to find that the survivor occasionally regrets the decease of his or her partner in life.

From Bideford are reported these three lines, which may be said to contain the epitaphs of two women, and in which the rhymes show true genius, if, as Lord Lytton II. once said, 'Genius does what it must, and talent does what it can':

' Here lies the body of Mary Sexton,
Who pleased many a man, but never vexed one;

Not like the woman who lies under the next stone.'

Returning to the county of Kent, we will make our way to Ightham, where we find a long inscription :

' To the pretious name and honour
of

DAME DOROTHY SELBY,

The relict of

Sir William Selby, Knt.,

The only daughter and heire of

Charles Bonham, Esq.

' She was a Dorcas

Whose curious needle turned the abused stage

Of this lewd world into the golden age;
Whose pen of steale and silken inck enrolled

The acts of Jonah in records of gold;
Whose arte disclosed the plot, which had it taken,

Rome had triumphed, and Britain's walls had shaken.

She was

In heart a Lydia, and in tongue a Hanna,
In zeal a Ruth, in wedlock a Susanna,
Prudently simple, providently wary,
To this world a Martha, and to heaven a Mary.'

No doubt Dame Dorothy was a most estimable matron—Dorcas, Lydia, Hannah, Ruth, Susanna, Martha, and Mary rolled into one. But O, the horrors of the acts of Jonah enrolled in her tapestry! Worse than the Berlin-work gardens of the last generation, or the crewel 'Kate Greenaway children' of our own day! And yet Dame Selby's needlework disclosing the Gunpowder Plot must have out-horrored the horrors of her Jonah; by those who saw it, it would never be forgot.

There are two words in the last epitaph which recall another, composed undoubtedly by a husband not of the Caudle kind, nor holding opinions akin to those of the gentleman of Chevening :

' What was she?

What every good woman ought to be,
That was she.'

This inscription is in the cemetery at Portsea; and the reticence of these few words is a finer epitaph than any number of heroic couplets or piled-up adjectives could possibly be. No higher tribute could a husband pay to the memory of a wife.

Prose epitaphs are exceptional; poetical ones are still more so. But memorial verses are innumerable. The Portsea 'good woman' is commemorated in a style greatly more pleasing than that employed in praise of another good woman lying in the burying-ground of Matlock parish church, Derbyshire :

' A virtuous wife, in prime of life,
By Death is snatched away;
Her soul is blest, and gone to rest,
Tho' Flesh is gone to clay.

She's left behind a Husband kind,
And three beloved children;
May they prepare to meet her where
True Love will ne'er be done.'

The unhappy author of the above was unable to hit upon a rhyme to *children*; the result is curious. From Minster church-

It would be regretted if, however, children

yard, Devon, comes an old inscription, quaint and touching, and without that under flavour of grim burlesque which we seem to perceive in almost all verse epitaphs :

'Shee first departing, Hee a few weeks
tryed
To live without her, could not, and so
dyed;
Both in their wedlock's great Sabatick
rest
To be, where there's no wedlock, ever
blest;
And having here a Jubily begun,
They're taken hence that it may ne'er be
done.'

In quite another style is the following, given in the *Annual Register* for 1758 (the first volume of that perennial) as 'An epitaph out of a churchyard in Dorsetshire :

'For me deceased weep not, my dear,
I am not dead, but sleepeth here
Your time will come, prepare to die,
Wait but awhile, you'll follow I.'

Such noble disregard of grammar reminds us of another inscription which oral tradition made famous in the days of our grandfathers, and which is, perhaps, old enough to have the charm of novelty. It very tersely records the manner by which the deceased came to his death :

'Here lies I,
Killed by a sky-
Rocket in my eye.'

Before quitting the subject of matrimonial epitaphs, we will notice one that is inscribed on a slab in the very old church of Birdbrook, near Halstead, Essex :

'Martha Blewit, of Swan Inn, at Baythorne End, in this parish, buried May 7th, 1681. She was the wife of nine husbands consecutively; but the ninth outlived her.'

In the register the same extraordinary fact is recorded in the style and spelling of the day :

'Mary Blewitt, ye wife of nine husbands successively, buried eight of ym, but last of all ye woman dy'd allsoe, and was buried May 7th, 1681.'

In the margin is written : 'This was her funerall sermon text.'

Plainly, Mrs. Blewitt did not

agree with the Chevening widower in his estimate of the married state. There surely would have been scope for the exercise of a little 'crownner's quest law' in the village of Birdbrook about two hundred years ago. It seems a pity that the fair Mary did not meet her match in the person of Robert Hogan, of whom it is recorded in the same church that he was 'the husband of seven wives successively.' It would be interesting to inquire whether such matrimonial customs are still kept up in the neighbourhood of Halstead.²

After so many epitaphs reflecting in various ways on conjugal affection, we will endeavour to ascertain in what manner filial respect and regard have been expressed in churchyard poetry. For this purpose we will make our way to the far west, and in the burying-ground of Truro parish church we pause before this very original stanza :

'Father and Mother and I
Chuse to be buried asunder;
Father and Mother lie buried here,
But I lies buried yonder.'

This is wonderfully frank and naïve; by choice, not by chance, father, mother, and child are buried apart. It might probably be said of them that 'they were unlovely in their lives, and in their deaths they were divided.' More pleasing is the family picture drawn by the following lines to the memory of Sir William Sutton in Averham churchyard; he, with eight of his children, having predeceased his wife and the remaining eight sons and daughters :

'Sir William Sutton's corps here toomb'd
sleepes,
Whose happy soul in better mansions
keepe;
Thrice nine years lived he with his ladye
faire—
A lovely, noble, and lyke vertuous payre.

² See *Evening Standard*, 6th January 1883.

Their generous offspring (parents joy of heart),
 Eight of each sex : of each an equal part
 Ushered to Heaven their father, the other
 Remained behind him to attend their mother.'

In distinct contrast to the above, in which like honour is in every way done to Sir William Sutton and to his ladye faire, we find a family picture in the churchyard of St. Ewe, Cornwall ; here the wife dies first, following three of her children, while her husband survives, accompanied by two of their progeny :

'Here lies the body of Joan Carthew,
 Born at St. Columb, buried at St. Ewe ;
 Children she had five,
 Three are dead and two alive,
 Those that are dead choosing rather
 To die with the Mother than live with
 the Father.'

It is commonly said that when husband and wife quarrel, the children almost invariably take the mother's part. But they do not always carry their love for her as far as did the three children of Mrs. Joan Carthew.

Before leaving that 'part of England nearest Spain' (as Cornwall was designated some three centuries ago) we will set down another inscription, which in two lines gives quite a biography of the deceased. It is at Madern :

'Belgium me birth, Britain me breeding
 gave,
 Cornwall a Wife, ten children, and a
 grave.'

Certainly this gentleman was under greater obligation to Cornwall than to Belgium or Britain. It may be remarked *en passant* that Cornwall is here spoken of as if it were not an integral part of Britain. Its peculiarities seem to separate it a good deal even from its neighbour Devonshire. The dark fierce rocks of the northern coast, the deep Mediterranean blue of the sea, the level country, the absence of trees, the quick agile men and women, the winterless

climate, all render Cornwall much unlike England, and, in some respects, somewhat akin to Spain.

Travelling into the adjoining county of Devonshire, we will make our way to the town of Tiverton, where, in the churchyard, we come upon an inscription quaint and curious in conception, diction, and spelling :

'Hoe ! Hoe ! who lies here ?
 I the poor Erie of Devonshire,
 With Maud my wife, to me ful dere ;
 We lyved together fifty-fyve yere.
 What wee gave wee have,
 What wee spent wee had,
 What wee left we loste.'

These three last lines have been often quoted, generally in a slightly different form :

'What I spent that I had ;
 What I left that I lost ;
 What I gave that I have.'

The meaning, of course, being that only the treasure laid up in heaven will be ours when the treasure of earth is corrupted by moth and rust, and the 'good sword is rust, and the body dust, and the soul with the saints, we trust.'

In quite another vein is the following, also from Tiverton. We have lately seen that husbands and wives are not always complimentary to their deceased partners ; we also perceive that a man's progeny do not invariably honour his memory. Can a spinster lady hope to escape hostile and posthumous criticism ? Surely one of the sisterhood is the author of the following :

'Beneath this silent stone is laid
 A noisy, antiquated maid,
 Who from the cradle talked till death,
 And ne'er before was out of breath.'

A worthy compeer of the above lady was she of whom the record runs shortly :

'Here rests in silent clay
 Miss Arabella Young,
 Who on the 21st of May
 Began to hold her tongue.'

Our researches in the west have afforded us amusement rather than

instruction. Those who prefer serious epitaphs shall be shown one in the dingy and crowded region east of London's gayest thoroughfare, Regent Street. That region a hundred years ago was highly fashionable; there lords and ladies resided, and gave their balls and routs; and thither came the great lexicographer, the first P.R.A., and all that London held of beauty, wealth, and talent, crowding up the oak staircases of grand houses in Soho Square and its neighbourhood. Fashion has moved westward, and still moves westward. But at one particular season of the year—towards the end of Lent, when worldly gaiety is lulled—rank, beauty, wealth, and talent still crowd the Soho district, setting like a tide towards St. Anne's Church. There is sung Bach's Passion Music; and they who love deep and solemn music, they who feel deep and solemn music, do well to hear it at St. Anne's, Soho, whenever they have the opportunity. Should they arrive before the doors are open, and should the evening be a bright one, they will find it worth while to take a turn in the churchyard, and to glance at a stone let into the outer wall of the tower. It is in memory of King Theodore, Baron Neuhoft, and the inscription runs thus:

'Near this place is interred
THEODORE, KING OF CORSICA,
Who died in this parish, Dec. 11, 1756,
Immediately after leaving
The King's Bench Prison,
By the benefit of the late act of insolvency;
In consequence of which,
He registered his kingdom of Corsica
For the use of his creditors.
The grave, great teacher, to a level
brings
Heroes and beggars, galley-slaves and
kings;
That Theodore this moral learned, ere
dead,
Fate poured its lessons on his living head,
Bestowed a kingdom and deny'd him
bread.'

In truth, the moral requires no pointing; it is sharp enough. And a greater Corsican than King Theodore, bankrupt of all, never left the King's Prison, and needs no epitaph.

From modern London to ancient Sidon is a long journey; but when we arrive at the site of the Phœnician city we shall be well rewarded for our pains. In January 1855 was discovered in a subterranean cemetery an extraordinary sarcophagus, which careful examination proved to be that of Ashmunazer, King of the Sidonians. A very long inscription in Phœnician characters contains the names of the god Baal and the goddess Astarte; and, speaking roughly, the date may be referred to the early days of the Israelites as a people—perhaps the times of the Judges. We all know the warning above Shakespeare's grave: 'Cursed be he that moves my bones;' and we know that no one has as yet ventured to incur that malediction. A similar curse concludes Ashmunazer's epitaph: 'My prohibition upon every royal person and upon every man who shall open upon me, or uncover me, or shall transfer me with this funeral couch, or take away the sarcophagus of my funeral couch, lest the holy gods desert them, and cut off that royal person or that man, whoever he may be, and their posterity for ever.' A very interesting description of the sarcophagus is given in Dr. W. M. Thomson's *The Land and the Book*. He adds: 'These imprecations will scarcely be visited upon Louis Napoleon, or the officers of the French corvette *La Sérieuse*, on board of which the sarcophagus was carried to France; for it had been opened by some former rifler of tombs probably in search of treasure.'

Thus wrote Dr. Thomson in

1869. A few years later, that royal person, the Emperor Napoleon III., was *deserted and cut off*; and yet a few more years, and his posterity—his only child, the Prince Imperial—also was cut off in the bright opening of his youth. It is curious to compare Ashmunazer's curse, Dr. Thomson's remark, and the extinction of the Emperor's immediate family. Mother Shipton's prophecies have not been fulfilled, and Old Moore now has few believers; but Ashmunazer foretold a fact.

Speaking generally, the more interesting inscriptions are in memory, not of kings or nobles, but of humbler mortals. Little can be said of a monarch which is not already known; and to write the story of his life on his tombstone would be but to transcribe a page of history. One would hardly think that anything very new or striking could be said of an English duke; yet a remarkable statement appears in the church of Millbrook, Bedfordshire. There is a grand marble monument to the memory of a steward in the employ of a Duke of Bedford; the servant is spoken of in the ordinary eulogistic style, while the master is described as '*crocus rotulorum*.'

The reader is no doubt familiar with the following epitaph; but perhaps he does not know that it is in Pewsey churchyard, Wiltshire. He is probably courteous, and will not complain at seeing it transcribed yet once more. We have received some information respecting a king and a duke; here is the biography of one who in her own days would have been styled a *person of quality*:

'Here lies the body of Lady O'Looney, great-niece of Burke, commonly called the Sublime. She was bland, passionate, and deeply religious: also she painted in water-colours, and sent several pictures to the Exhibition. She was first-cousin to

Lady Jones: and of such is the kingdom of Heaven.'

The biographical and the historical styles are blended in the long inscription above the grave of Margaret Scott in Dalkeith Churchyard. She died in 1738, aged 125 years (more or less!). If she was born in 1613, she lived through the reigns of James VI. of Scotland and I. of England, of Charles I., of Charles II., of James II., of William and Mary, of Anne, and of the first two Georges. She saw the first king who united the crowns of Scotland and England, and she saw the blending of the two Parliaments. George Heriot was living when she was young, and Porteous was hanged when she was old. She is supposed to say of herself:

'Stop, passenger, until my life you read:
The living may get knowledge by the dead,
Five times five years I lived a virgin's life:
Ten times five years I was a virtuous wife:
Ten times five years I lived a widow chaste;
Now, weary'd of this mortal life, I rest,
Between my cradle and my grave have been
Eight mighty kings of Scotland, and a queen.
Four times five years the Commonwealth I saw;
Ten times the subjects rose against the law.
Twice did I see old Prelacy pull'd down,
And twice the cloak was humbled by the gown.
An end of Stuart's race I saw: nay, more,
My native country sold for English ore.
Such desolations in my life have been,
I have an end of all perfection seen.'

Scott by name and Scot by nature was this more than centenarian. An English writer may be allowed to make a few comments on her epitaph. Seven kings, not eight, reigned during her life; they were kings of Great Britain, not merely of Scotland. She is very bitter against Prelacy. The *gown*, of course, means the Geneva preaching gown; the *cloak*

probably signifies the priestly chasuble. The Scottish people sold their *king*, Charles I., to the English Parliament.

From a very old woman we will turn to a very young man, one Thomas Oliver, who died at the age of seventeen, and whose epitaph is to be seen in the churchyard at Welshpool, Montgomeryshire :

'You that are young, Behold and see
How quickly Death Hath conquered me.
His fatal stroke it was so strong,
And took me off when I was young;
But God Himself He knew for why
That in my youth I was to die.'

There is something plaintive in the two last lines; they who mourned for Thomas Oliver did not know for why he was to die in his youth. A still more juvenile person is bewailed in some lines by, presumably, an American author. They are in Philadelphia, but where, in that large territory, the present writer cannot ascertain. The word *wilted* is equivalent to *withered*, and is one of those many old English words which have died out from their mother tongue, but have survived in their new home across the Atlantic :

'The sweetest flower to bloom on earth,
The little rose that crowned our plot,
Has wilted here to blossom forth
In a superior flower-pot.
His body lies in the Union ground,
His soul has gone to the One who
gave it,
And we shall never hear again
The prattling of our little Jacob.'

This is delicious! The careful preparation of the end of the sixth line, in order to make a rhyme to *David*, and then the astounding substitution of *Jacob*, is one of the most surprising things ever accomplished by a churchyard poet. The American carefully avoided his natural rhyme. An English author ends an epitaph at Great Burstead, Essex, in these words :

'Preserve us, Lord, we humbly Thee
entreat,
Till we arrive at Sion's Mount from
Burstead Great.'

Many inscriptions are supposed to emanate from the lips of the dead man lying beneath the stone; but not many persons have actually prepared their own inscriptions. Regnier wrote thus of himself :

'J'ai vecu sans nul pensement
Me laissant aller doucement,
A la bonne loi naturelle;
Et je m'estonne fort pourquoy
La mort osa songer à moy
Qui ne songeay jamais à elle.'

Thus translated :

'Gaily I lived at ease, as nature taught,
And spent my little life without a
thought,
And am amazed that Death, that tyrant
grim,
Should think of me who never thought of
him.'

Death has a good memory; he can wait, but he never forgets. And Regnier disproves his own words, for a man must contemplate decease when he prepares his own epitaph. This is not the place in which to preach, or even to moralise; but the following lines convey playfully some grave considerations; they are headed, 'On a pipe of tobacco' :

'Thro' worthless tube of brittle clay
Will I some serious thoughts convey.
My native frailty here I trace,
A perfect type of human race,
Exotic is the noisome plant,
Exotic all for which I pant;
With sickening fumes the air I choke;
What's worldly grandeur but a smoke?
The quickening whiffs declare the strife
Of those who gasp for parting life;
The heap of dust that's left behind
Displays the fate of all mankind.'

Much to the same effect was a short verse which the present writer remembers to have seen, when a child, in one of those receptacles of trash called albums, the forerunners of birthday-books and other follies :

'Man's a vapour
Full of woes,
Cuts a caper,
Down he goes!'

A greater variety of metaphor could hardly be crammed into thirteen words. The manner in which a vapour can be full of woes, and can cut a caper, requires explanation by some eminent chemist.

Among actual epitaphs, one given in the *Annual Register* for 1764, on John Tissey, described as 'a late punster,' seems to merit transcription :

'Beneath this gravel and those stones
Lie poor Jack Tissey's skin and bones ;
His flesh, I oft have heard him say,
He hoped in time would make good hay,
Quoth I, "How can that come to pass?"
And he replied, "All flesh is grass."

It is not difficult for a man to joke about his own decease when that event appears far distant. There are also some, who can smile and jest, like Anne Boleyn, when the axe was bared ready to smite her slender neck ; or like Thistlewood, one of the Cato Street conspirators, who, with his foot on the scaffold, said to his companions in death, 'Now for the last grand secret !' Physical courage will sustain many in the supreme moment ; moral courage will sustain many more. Faith, hope, and love sustained the martyrs. In the *Holy Dying*, a book which should be well studied by the living, Bishop Jeremy Taylor remarks that the terror of death consists not in our leaving this world, but in the manner of our leaving it. The sickness, the agony, the weeping friends around, the farewell to all that our eyes have seen and our hands have touched—these are the pains of death. The spirit shrinks from the parting which must come ; the 'naked essence' must lay down the body, without which she has never known herself, and go she knows not whither, parted asunder from both body and soul. It is the loneliness of death which is so terrible ; we do 'faint and

fear to live alone,' and we do yet more painfully faint and fear to die alone. Could we leave the world taking our bodies with us, then welcome such an euthanasia ! If God would take us as Enoch was taken, we should not dread to go ; if the chariot of Israel waited for us as for Elijah, we should most willingly welcome the whirlwind blowing from earth to heaven. But we must pass through the grave and gate of death, where all is dark and all is vague ; and human nature, however sustained, trembles at the darkness and the vagueness beyond. How, then, must they feel who rush headlong into the darkness, who light no lamp, nay, who put out their lamp ? The man who nearly destroys his body by gross sin, and then, to escape the temporal consequences of his sin, murders himself, with what feelings does he contemplate the darkness of the grave, the lurid light of the thereafter ?

On the 9th of January 1883 an inquest was held at Liverpool on the body of a chemist's traveller, named Holland, who had committed suicide by drowning. We cannot, with all our charity, set him down as even temporarily insane. He knew well that he was about to kill himself, and he knew the vice that had brought him to so miserable an end. He left a paper, on which was written what we may regard as his epitaph. It raises a smile, followed instantly by a deep sigh of pity : 'I take off my hat, bow, and retire. Here lies Holland's body, full of drink.'

Other, and many other, persons have died from the effects of drink. Holland did not specify the precise kind of drink which killed him, but we make a shrewd guess that it was alcoholic. What will our friends the teetotallers find to say of him ? and what will they

find to say of the unfortunate victims of drink who are said to lie buried somewhere in the parish churchyard of Cheltenham?

'Here lies I and my two daughters,
All from drinking Cheltenham waters;
Had we stuck to Epsom Salts
We should not be in these here vaults.'

While we are on the subject of imbibed deaths we will pay a visit to the churchyard at Branscombe, Devon, where is an epitaph on William Lee, the father, and Robert Lee, the son, buried together in one grave, October 2nd, 1628:

'Reader, ask not who lies here
Unless thou mean to drop a tear;
Father and Son here jointly have
One life, one death, one tomb, one grave;
Impartial hand, that durst to slay
The Root and Branch both in one day;
The comfort in their fate is this,
That both have gone to joy and bliss.
The wine that in these earthen vessels lay
The hand of Death hath lately drawn
away,
And as a present sent it up on high,
Whilst here the vessels with the Lees do
lye.

The memory of the just are (sic) blessed.'

About a dozen years ago, the above lines were easily legible; but since then time and weather have taken great effect on the old stones, and they can with difficulty be deciphered. In the same churchyard, and under like circumstances, is an inscription on a headstone to the memory of a labourer, who died suddenly whilst at work in the fields. Observe the ingenious rhyme:

'Strong, and at labour, suddenly he reels,
Death came behind him and tripped up
his heels;
Such sudden strokes, surviving mortals,
bid ye
Stand on your watch and be ye always
ready.'

The manner in which Death seizes on his victim has supplied the subject for many an epitaph. There is a personal appeal in such inscriptions; for the reader cannot but pause and question with himself, May not my end come in

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like manner? Yet it is hardly probable that we shall incur illness after the sort commemorated in Winchester Cathedral:

'Here lies in peace a Hampshire Grenadier,
Who caught his death by drinking cold
small beer;
Soldiers, be warned by his untimely fall,
And when you're hot, drink strong or not
at all.'

Our friends the teetotallers will hardly admire the above; but they may learn from information received in Whitby churchyard that water is sometimes as fatal as beer, small or strong; this is in memory of an old man, and of

'Likewise
His grandson, who died
October 4th, 1852, aged 5 years.
His illness laid not in one part,
But through his frame it spread:
The fatal disease was at his heart,
And water in his head.'

Still more strange and horrible was the complication of evils that beset an unfortunate woman, and resulted in this verse, inscribed above her remains:

'Poor Martha Snell, she's gone away,
She would if she could, but she could not
stay;
She'd two bad legs and a baddish cough,
But her legs it was that carried her off.'

The three ladies who are supposed to have died through drinking Cheltenham waters very probably swallowed the nauseous draught under their own medical advice. It is commonly said, in the legal profession, that the man who is his own lawyer has a fool for his client; the man who is his own physician has a similar patient. Yet there have been sick folks who had fools, and worse, for their physicians. Whoever wrote the epitaph said to be placed over the remains of a Dr. John Lettsam had no great veneration for the medical skill of the deceased, who is represented as thus describing his own style of practice:

AA

'When folks are sick they come to me,
I physics, bleeds, and sweats 'em;
Sometimes they live, sometimes they
die;

What's that to me?

I, Lettsam.'

This certainly was the kill or cure system. Doctors have fared badly at the hands of epitaph-mongers. Of a certain physician it is written :

'Here lies the corpse of Dr. Chard,
Who filled the half of this churchyard.'

And of another M.D. we read this biography, which seems to need some explanation :

'Here lies Dr. Trollope,
Who made these stones roll up;
He took a dose of jalop,
And God took his soul up.'

In Solyhull Churchyard, Warwickshire, is an elaborate account of the life and death of the wife of a Dr. Greenwood. The epitaph, written by the widower, is in every way remarkable, and the cause of death is revealed in the last line :

'Go, cruel Death, thou hast cut down
The fairest Greenwood in all this king-
dom!

Her virtues and her good qualities were
such

That surely she deserved a lord or a
judge :

But her piety and great humility
Made her prefer me, a Doctor in Di-
vinity;

Which heroic action, join'd to all the
rest,

Made her to be esteemed the Phoenix of
her sex :

And like that bird a young she did
create

To comfort those her loss had made dis-
consolate.

My grief for her was so sore

That I can only utter two lines more.

For this and all other good women's sake,
Never let blisters be applied to a lying-in
Woman's back.'

In metre, in rhyme, in grammar, in style, Dr Greenwood has really outdone the feats of nearly all our other epitaphists. The doctor of medicine in attendance on the wife of the Doctor in Divinity was a worthy *confrère* of Dr. Lettsam.

Not every unnatural death is

attributable to the doctor. A Mr. Cadman made himself a pair of wings, emulating the enterprise of the mechanician of the Happy Valley, and with a similar result; but as *Rasselas* was not written until twenty years later, he could not profit by the warning contained therein. It is true that similar warnings were not wanting; for John Baptist Dante, who lived about the end of the fifteenth century, made wings unto himself. He flew across the lake Trasimenus, but afterwards was checked in his aerial flight by falling on a church, and breaking his thigh. He lived to become professor of mathematics at Venice. Less fortunate was Mr. Cadman, who flew not *on* but *from* a church, or rather he attempted to fly from the tower of St. Mary's Abbey Church, Shrewsbury, across the Severn. His epitaph is let into the outside of the tower of that church :

'Let this small monument record the
fame

Of Cadman, and to future times proclaim
How by 'n attempt to fly from this high

spire
Across the Sabrine stream he did acquire
His fatal end. 'Twas not for want of

skill,
Or courage to perform the task, he fell.

No, No, a faulty cord being drawn too
tight

Hurried his Soul on high to take her
flight,

Which bid the body here good night.

Feb. 2, 1739.

This is realistic and simple. Another simple inscription is on a tomb at Ramsgate, to the memory of Mary Kent. It consists of the injunction, 'Reader, prepare to follow me.' A reader, perhaps inquisitive, perhaps malicious, added in pencil :

'How can we follow Mary Kent,
Unless we know which way she went ?

An English churchyard is generally a sweet beautiful place, with smooth turf and bright flowers, a God's Acre; but a

Scottish burying-ground is usually the most dismal spot imaginable; stones toppling over, walls broken down, nettles, weeds, fungi, all desecrating the place of the dead, and adding horrors to the sadness of the grave. Appropriate enough to such a hopeless wilderness is this:

' Shall	we	all	die?
We	shall	die	all.
All	die	shall	we?
Die	all	we	shall.'

The reader will notice that this inscription can be read backwards and forwards, up and down. In extenuation of the neglected state of Scottish churchyards, we ought, perhaps, to mention the supposed reason for their usually shocking condition; viz. that Presbyterians fear lest care for the resting-place of their friends' bodies should lead to solicitude respecting the resting-place of their friends' souls; and so love for the dead might end in prayer for the dead.

As an arrangement of words—or rather syllables—the following, which appeared in the *Mirror*, and was copied into the *Times* of 20th September 1828, is curious. It is stated to be in a churchyard in Germany, and the reader will perceive that it is akin to the old puzzle of our childhood, which proved to be the interesting remark, 'I understand you undertake to overthrow my undertaking.'

'O	quid	tua	te
be	bis	bia	abit
	ra	ra	ra
		es	
	et	in	
	ram	ram	ram
		i	i

Mox eris quod ego nunc.'

When rightly read, it appears to be: 'O superbe quid superbis? tua superbia te superabit. Terra es et in terram ibis. Mox eris quod ego nunc.' The ingenious and learned person who composed the above was probably not more learned than the subject of an

epitaph at Kendal; it is on Ralph Tyerer, B.D., a former vicar, who died June 4th, 1627:

' London bred me,	Westminster fed me,
Cambridge sped me,	My sister wed me,
Study taught me,	Living sought me,
Learning brought me,	Kendal caught me,
Labour pressed me,	Sickness distressed me,
Death oppressed me,	The grave possessed me,
God first gave me,	Christ did save me,
Earth did crave me,	And Heaven would have me.'

This inscription is on a brass, within the chancel rails of Kendal Church; the fourth clause has been a great puzzle. The present vicar writes that it has baffled 'the critical acumen of the Fellows of Trinity College, Cambridge, who have on several occasions had the difficulty presented to them, but have failed to solve it.' If one might venture a fresh suggestion, it would be that the words should read, 'Her sister wed me,' which might be explained thus: that Mr. Tyerer was married at Oxford, the sister University to Cambridge.

One wonders somewhat at the certainty with which the happiness of the departed is taken for granted by their eulogists. Knowing, as we do, almost nothing of the silent land, we read with doubt, though with hope, the epitaphs which assert that their subjects have reached a state of bliss. But there is no rule without an exception; and in Otsego County, New York, may be seen a stone with this very short and fiery inscription:

'John burns.'

Brevity hath charms; and in these days of hurried life, when we complain that fifty miles an hour is a slow rate of travelling, we have hardly time to read, and no inclination or ability to remember, long inscriptions. Those

who erected a memorial to Sir John Strange, a lawyer, were, in this respect, in advance of their age. Of him they say:

'Here lies an honest lawyer; that is Strange.'

Strange, yet true! At Finedon there is a curt though graceful couplet:

'Here lyeth Richard Dent,
In his last tenement.
1709.'

Of another gentleman, a Mr. Box, the nature of his final resting-place is announced in euphonious verse. A suspicion arises that on this occasion the undertaker was also the poet, and managed to insert a neat advertisement in an epitaph:

'Here lies one Box within another;
The one of wood
Was very good;
We cannot say so much for t'other.'

A remarkable inscription is placed over a remarkable man:

'John Macpherson
Was a remarkable person;
He stood six feet two
Without his shoe,
And he was slew
At Waterloo.'

All honour to the memory of John Macpherson, and of all other gallant soldiers who were slew at Waterloo, were they English, Scotch, or Irish! From the last-named nationality comes a characteristic epitaph:

'Under this stone lie two babies dear,
One is buried in Connaught, and the other here.'

Very curious is the following, written, as one may surmise, by a fervent Protestant, whose care for the deceased could not cross the chasm of the grave:

'Here lies the body of Gabriel John,
Who died in the year eighteen hundred and one;
Pray for his soul, or let it alone,
For it is all one to Gabriel John,
Who died in the year eighteen hundred and one.'

A very great number of epitaphs are so strange, so ludicrous,

and so indecent, that one marvels how they ever came, even in times less reverent than our own, to be placed above the dead, and left bare to the public gaze. Here is something described as 'from a churchyard in Wales':

'Here I lie and shout and sing,
And make the heavenly regions ring;
Come on, come on, my Esmond dear,
I am not dead but sleepeth here.
Weep not for me, my children three,
But be prepared to follow me.'

The notion of the deceased lying and sleeping, and at the same time shouting and singing, reminds us of the famous epitaph in Bakewell churchyard in remembrance of Phillip Roe, who died 12th September 1815, aged 52 years:

'The vocal powers here let us mark
Of Phillip our late Parish Clerk,
In church none ever heard a layman
With a clearer voice say "Amen;"
Who now with Hallelujah's sound
Like him can make the Roofs rebound?
The choir lament his choral Tones,
The Town—so soon here lie his Bones;
Sleep undisturbed within thy peaceful shrine,
Till Angels wake thee with such notes as
thine.'

Let us fervently hope that the archangel's trump will be softer and sweeter in tone than was the professional voice of Phillip Roe. His vocal vigour appears to have been a source of pride among his friends. In an epitaph on a guide who formerly showed the ruins of Melrose Abbey, the moral qualities of the deceased are eulogised:

'The precious dust beneath this stone
Once showed this ancient pile,
And formed an Israelite indeed
In whom there was no guile.'

A guileless guide to a show-place would indeed be a wonderful person; the profession of a cicerone demands a powerful memory, and a fund of imagination as poetic as that of a writer of epitaphs.

The above being clerical in character, let us see what can be done in the military line. Our

only reference is to a church near Ilfracombe :

'How sleep the brave who sink to rest
By all their country's wishes blest,
They sleep not in their regimentals,
Such things being here not deemed essential.'

The satire is undeniable, and the couplet from Collins is very pretty. But one would like further evidence before believing that, as an epitaph, it is genuine. That the following is at Lillington, near Leamington, there is no reason to doubt; the lines are touching. They are in memory of a man named John Trees :

'Poorly lived,
And poorly died,
Poorly buried,
And no one cried.'

Equally melancholy, though with a different kind of sadness, are the rhymes on John Hill; they come from 'a churchyard at Manchester' :

'Here lies John Hill, a man of skill,
His age was five times ten,
He ne'er did good, nor ever would,
Had he lived as long again.'

Very likely not, for if in half a century a man does no good he will hardly turn over a new leaf at fifty years of age. Is the following to be considered as an eulogium on the person commemorated ?—

'Provost Peter Paterson was Provost of Dundee,
Provost Peter Paterson, here lies he,
Hallelujah, Hallelujee !'

And what is the meaning of this singular inscription in Cusop churchyard, Herefordshire ? Has it any meaning at all ?

'If earth be all
Why o'er and o'er a beaten path
You walk and draw up nothing new.
Not so our martyred seraph did
When from the Verge of Wales he fled.'

The martyred seraph was William Seward of Badsey, Worcester, who died October 22nd, 1742; how a man could be a seraph,

and how a seraph could be martyred, are unexplained mysteries.

It is somewhat curious to find a person not only writing his own epitaph, but doing it in the following manner. Mr. Thompson speaks of himself as dead and buried; and yet he survived himself for the space of sixteen years. At Kirk Braddan, in the Isle of Man, we read :

'Here underlyeth the body of the
Reverend Mr. PATRICK THOMPSON,
Minister of God's Word forty years,
At present vicar of Kirk Braddan,
Aged 67, anno 1673.
Deceased ye 24th April, Anno 1689.'

This vicar apparently looked forward with calm equanimity to his death; 'a calm despair' is indicated by these melancholy lines :

'At threescore winter's end I died
A cheerless being, lone and sad,
The nuptial knot I never tied,
And wished my father never had.'

Not very Christian and not very cheering are the specimens of churchyard poetry hitherto presented to the reader. Foolish flattery of the dead, vain regrets for the life ended, some quaint conceit, some absurd fancy—these are the things which greet our eyes as we loiter in the cities of the dead. We need not weep for those who are gone before: they rest from their labours, and their works, if worthy, do follow them; but if we have no desire to weep, neither should we expect to laugh. Better a few simple words, better only the name and date graven on the marble, as in the hearts of those whom death has divided for a season from the dust now lying in the dust, than elaborate inscriptions wherein not even one step separates the would-be sublime from the actually ridiculous. Is there not something home-like, comfortable, contented, in this notice above a grave in Shoreditch churchyard ?—

'Dr. JOHN GARDNER's last and best
bedroom,
Who departed this life the
8th of April 1835,
In his 84th year.'

Last and best indeed, as far as
our actual knowledge goes; for
when we have laid our loved ones
in the tomb, we turn away full of
wonder: there lies the body, where
is the spirit? We say, 'Here lies
such an one;' and we say wrong;
for the instant the spirit departs,
the body is no longer *he*, but *it*.
The body lives by its union with
the spirit; the spirit, we feel cer-
tain with moral certainty, lives
independently of the body. And,

therefore, smile as we may at
foolish things written above men's
mouldering bodies, we know that
such things cannot hurt men's
immaterial spirits. Folly, spite,
irreverence, pursue men to the
grave; faith and love follow them,
yet scarce know how to follow
them beyond it.

'Could he disclose, who rests below,
The things beyond the grave that lie,
We more should learn than now we
know,
But know no better how to die.'

These lines are at Luss, on Loch
Lomond.

NIGHT THOUGHTS.

So still and calm, so beautiful the night,
The burning heat had passed;
To eyes that wearied with excess of light
Darkness had come at last.

Far overhead, in the deep vault of heaven,
Stars kept their brilliant way—
The great Orion, and those Sisters Seven,
With all their bright array.

And as I watched the glorious firmament,
Behold, a bright star fell;
So silently it fell, with slow descent
And sad and mute farewell.

Say, hast thou left the sphere appointed thee,
Like some lost earthly soul,
Finding thy faith and patience failing thee
Before thou'dst won the goal?

Or hast thou taken but a lower room,
In which to work and pray;
Unselfish love seeking, through toil and gloom,
Those that have gone astray?

With trembling hope and passionate desire
The eager questions rose;
Unsatisfied, unquenched, they still aspire,
Till this strange life shall close.

Striving to penetrate the mystery,
Our human senses fail,
Till Death, the great revealer, passing by,
Gently withdraws the veil.

E. C.

BLACKFRIARS AND THE PLAYERS.

Of the many religious houses in the metropolis previous to the dissolution, few were of fairer dimensions and greater importance than the head-quarters of the order founded by Dominic de Guzman. On the steep northern bank of the river, within a spacious precinct, stood their church—a magnificent edifice with two aisles; resplendent chancel, and Lady chapel—which had been erected by Robert Kilwarby, Archbishop of Canterbury. Noticeable among the conventual buildings was the noble chapter-house westward of the cloister; and in the bend of the City wall which sheltered the monastery was a 'good and comely tower,' built in the days of the first Edward specially for the reception and accommodation of the king. In truth, Blackfriars was preëminently a place wherein kings and king-like men, living or dead, might be 'received and tarry with honour.' Some notable parliaments had assembled here; the Emperor Charles V. was lodged here during his second visit to England; and here, in the great hall, the cardinal-legates, Wolsey and Campeggio, appointed by Pope Clement VII. to decide Henry's claim for a divorce from Catherine of Aragon, held their court. Hither, too, had been brought the hearts of Queen Eleanor and her son Alphonso, and the bodies of the great Kentish earl, Hubert de Burgh, of his wife—a king's daughter—Margaret of Scotland, and of many others of lesser place, perhaps, but of no mean degree, who found

in their graves within this 'temple of reconciliation and silence' a peace they had never known while living. Nor can we wonder at the long bead-roll of illustrious personages for whom was asked 'a little earth' within the church of the Black Friars, when we read that to be buried in the habit of this order was thought to insure certain immunity from all unwelcome posthumous attentions on the part of the evil one. But the time came when not even the ashes of the great company of worthies entombed therein, much less any other of its sacred or historical associations, availed to procure for this monastic house an exemption from the spoliation sustained by so many noble ecclesiastical edifices.

It seemed good to his Highness, bluff King Hal of ever-blessed and glorious (?) memory, to entertain grave misgivings as to the legality of his marriage some seventeen years previously with his brother's widow. Gossip, though it had not yet attained to the dignity of a fine art, was a favourite *divertissement* of all sorts and conditions of his subjects. Many of these made bold to assert that the royal scruples were of a carnal rather than of a spiritual sort, and that the contemplation of the youthful charms of one of the Queen's maids of honour, and his anxiety to substitute the companionship *ad vitam aut culpam* of this Mistress Anne for that of the faded wife of whom he had grown weary, in reality caused the disquietude of the kingly conscience. Their most religious and

gracious sovereign, however, was not mightily concerned with what his faithful lieges were pleased to think or say. Neither the people of England nor a power at that time greater even than they, that of Rome, might deter him from his purpose. No need to tell how this vulgar incident of a licentious King's illicit passion had for its issue a stupendous revolution. Every schoolboy knows well enough that the Defender of the Faith signalised his assumption of the headship of the spirituality within his kingdom by suppressing the religious foundations and confiscating their property. Blackfriars was despoiled with the rest; and the monastery, within whose walls had been seen for centuries the sable raiment of the Friars Preachers, was to be associated ere long with the gay livery of the players.

At the dissolution the keys were intrusted to Sir John Portynarie, who was appointed keeper; and several noblemen took up their residence within the precinct. The Mayor had ventured to assert a claim to the liberties; which, reaching Henry's ears, called forth the characteristic but hardly felicitous rejoinder that the King 'was as well able to keep the liberties as the friars were.' In 1547 the friars' lodgings and the hall were granted to Sir Francis Bryan. But by this time his inconstant Highness, the despotic Henry, had passed to where women cease from troubling and, perhaps, even lustful monarchs are at rest. To the Master of the Revels and Tents and his assistants were allotted offices in Blackfriars; and hither early in February they brought from the hostel of the Earl of Warwick in Holborn, where they had previously been kept, the apparel and furniture for the Court revels. At

Blackfriars fresh masks and garments were made and some old ones altered for the use of the players during the revels to be presently held in honour of the boy-king's coronation. Among the gear that underwent renovation at this date was 'the mount,' a fearfully and wonderfully made stage property, which had been used some forty years previously in a pageant at Richmond, when Hall described it as being 'devised like a mountayne glisteringe by night, as though it had been all of golde and set with stones; on the top of the which mountayne was a tree of golde, the braunches and bowes frysed with golde, spredynge on every side over the mountayne with roses and pomegranettes.' Among the new dresses furnished for the players were coats for Turks, cassocks or short garments for falconers, Italian gowns for women, garments for Moors, and frocks for Egyptians. Evidently neither expense nor trouble was spared in providing appropriate costumes for the various characters. We have no record of what the play was; but from such items in an inventory still extant (*Loseley MSS.*) as garments for friars, caps for priests, and a great pasteboard, gilded with fine gold, for making crowns and cross for the Pope, as well as from our knowledge of what opinions alone found favour with the Court, we may infer that it was a morality which served as a vehicle for satire on the adherents and doctrines of the older faith. Anyhow, the morality of *Lusty Juventus* was written expressly with that view in the same reign, during which, as also in that of Queen Mary, Reformers and Catholics alike strove in this manner to advance the principles they respectively favoured. A consideration of the character of these

plays, however, is somewhat remote from our immediate purpose, since the Revels Accounts make it quite plain that the offices in Blackfriars, until after Queen Elizabeth's accession, were solely used as a depository of the various properties, the dramatic entertainments taking place at Whitehall, Nonsuch, Hampton Court, or some other palatial residence.

Four years after his accession, King Edward granted the whole house and precinct of Blackfriars to Sir Thomas Cawarden, the Master of the Revels, who forthwith demolished the church. At this date the Yeoman of the Revels, who is described in a contemporary document as the custodian '*omnium apparell: trap-pers, masks et revells*,' was John Holte, and the Clerk of the Revels was Richard Lees, the latter of whom appears to have been in receipt of a larger salary, not only than the Yeoman, but than the Master himself. After the death of Sir Thomas Cawarden, which occurred in 1560, the office of the Revels was removed from Blackfriars to the suppressed hospital of St. John of Jerusalem, near Smithfield. During the time that the office was located at Blackfriars, the history of the stage had been a chequered one. The impolicy of encouraging the players to ridicule such religious opinions as were obnoxious to their patrons soon became apparent; and audiences, upon whom these sallies in time began to pall, evinced a very decided relish for allusions to political topics and but thinly disguised satire on the more prominent courtiers of the day. Frequent prohibition of the performance of plays and interludes was the result; nevertheless, on the removal of the interdiction, the players invariably indulged in greater license than

before, thus bringing about unconsciously an easy transition from the old disguisings to the regular drama of a but little later time.

Recent research has done much towards proving the fallacy of the belief which had hitherto obtained as to the existence of a theatre in Blackfriars so early as the year 1576, and the *début*, in his capacity of actor, of the great dramatist of all time upon its boards. Despite apparent testimony to the contrary discovered by Mr. Collier in the archives of the Earl of Ellesmere, it is certain that the Blackfriars Theatre was not erected until a much later date. The first continuous* dramatic representations within the precinct were, in all probability, those given by the Children of the Chapel during the last decade of the sixteenth century. Good Queen Bess, although she occasionally deemed it politic to acquiesce in the treatment the players encountered at the hands of pious magistrates and strait-laced Lord Mayors, had a strong predilection for the stage. In 1569, if not earlier, the Children of the Chapel acted secular plays in the Chapels Royal. We ascertain this from a puritanical print published that year, and entitled *The Children of the Chapel stript and whipt*, wherein the writer complains that 'even in her Majesty's chapels do these pretty upstart youthes prophane the Lordes-day by the lascivious writhing of their tender limbes, and gorgeous decking of their apparell, in feigning bawdie fables, gathered from the idolatrous heathen poets' In 1586 the Queen, following the arbitrary

* Evidence of occasional performances having taken place here at an earlier period is furnished by various contemporary publications.

precedent set by Richard III.—the very last person, supposing the popular estimate of his character to be a true one, we should suspect of a partiality for the fine arts, but who is, nevertheless, said to have had a decided affection for music—authorised Thomas Gyles, master of the Children of St. Paul's, to impress whatever children, among those attached to cathedral or collegiate churches, he thought fit, to be instructed and trained for the entertainment of the Court. 'The Children of Powles' were for a long while much favoured by the public and the Court; but, having in 1589 brought Martin Marprelate upon their stage, their performances were prohibited, and do not appear to have been resumed until some ten years later. Long before that time had elapsed the Children of the Chapel had attained to a high degree of histrionic proficiency, and were in great request.

Noblemen and gentlemen of distinction still resided in Blackfriars; and at the commencement of 1596 we find Lord Hunston writing to Sir Thomas Cawarden's executor, Sir William More of Loseley, that he wishes to take a house from him within the precinct. In his letter my lord intimates that he has heard Sir William had already parted with a portion of his own house there to some that meant to convert it into a playhouse. The rumour, if premature, proved to be well founded; for within a month a large part of the premises, including the rooms originally assigned to the Master of the Revels, was conveyed by Sir William to James Burbage, one of the five servants of the Earl of Leicester, to whom, in 1574, had been granted a patent under the great seal—the first conceded in this country to

performers of plays—empowering them to exercise 'the art and faculty of playing comedies, tragedies, interludes, and stage-plays,' as well for the recreation of the Queen's loving subjects as for her own solace and pleasure. The property was acquired by Burbage at a heavy cost; and its conversion into a playhouse involved a further outlay of considerable amount. We learn this from a statement made in 1635 by the Burbages in their petition to the Earl of Pembroke, then Lord Chamberlain. Said they: 'For the Blackfriars, that is our inheritance; our father purchased it at extreme rates, and made it into a playhouse with great charge and trouble.*' In *Historia Histrionica* the old Cavalier is made to say that, both in form and size, this theatre corresponded with that in Salisbury Court; consequently it could not have been of large dimensions; for that the latter house was a small one is evident from these lines in an epilogue to one of Nabbes' comedies, which was performed there:

'When others filled rooms with neglect
disdain ye,
My little house with thanks shall entertain ye.'

After the necessary alterations had been made, it was leased to the master of the Children of the Chapel or his representative. In all likelihood—and the fact of the house having been let by the owner as soon as the alterations were completed tends to confirm this opinion—Burbage had been led to secure the property in Blackfriars, the precinct and liberty of which lay outside the jurisdiction of the Corporation, in consequence of the hostility to

* In November 1596 many of the inhabitants of Blackfriars petitioned the Privy Council to prohibit Burbage from establishing a playhouse within the precinct.

wards the players displayed through a series of years by intolerant Lord Mayors and other civic dignitaries. It was desirable to have a place where he and his company could appear when prohibited from playing within the City. What with the frequent recurrence of the plague, and the still more frequent interference of fussily-officious and narrow-minded City potentates, this, 'the fair beginning of a time' destined to be preëminently glorious in the history of the English drama, was a singularly untoward period for the players. During the prevalence of the sickness the theatres were closed, and plays and other amusements prohibited. The necessity of this was obvious; the assertion that 'suche assemblies of the people, in thronge and presse, have been very dangerous for spreadinge of infection,' could not be gainsaid. But the cessation of the epidemic was not usually accompanied by any amelioration of the prospects of the followers of Thespis; on the contrary, various specious pretexts were advanced to justify the imposition of fresh vexatious restrictions on the practice of their art. If the plague had chastised them with whips, the growing spirit of Puritanism was bent on chastising them with scorpions; and the unfortunate players found the inflictions of the magistracy less intermittent and more grievous than the 'visitation of God.' One of the occasions on which

'From Troynovaunt's olde cittie
The Aldermen and Maier
Have drivn eche poore plaier,'

is somewhat humorously referred to in a contemporary satirical epigram, preserved in MS., and entitled 'The Fooles of the Cittie,' wherein the expulsion of the actors from the City is attributed to a desire, on the part of the

civic authorities, that none should 'play the foole' but themselves, the author going on to say,

'Without a pipe and taber,
They onely meane to labor
To teche eche oxe-hed neyber.
This is the cause and reason,
At every tyme and season,
That Playes are worse than treason.'

It is by no means improbable that the Children of the Chapel had acted occasionally* in Blackfriars before Burbage's adaptation of this building to theatrical purposes; and it is certain that it was used solely by them until they assumed the name of Children of her Majesty's Revels (1603) and for some time afterwards. Previous to 1599 they produced here various plays by Lyly, of which some had formerly been in the *répertoire* of the Children of St. Paul's, and others subsequently became the property of that company when they resumed their performances after their long enforced silence. Between 1599 and 1602 the Children of the Chapel performed at Blackfriars three of Ben Jonson's plays — viz. *The Case is Altered*, *Cynthia's Revels*, and *Poetaster*; Lyly's comedy, *The Maid's Metamorphosis*; Marston's tragi-comedy, *The Malcontent*; and a comedy entitled *Sir Gyles Goose-Capke, Knight*. Two lists of this boys' company have been preserved, of which one gives the names of those who played *Cynthia's Revels* in 1600, and the other recounts those who, in the following year, took parts in *Poetaster*. In the former, Nathaniel Field, John Underwood, Salathiel Pavy, Thomas Day, Robert Baxter, and John Frost are mentioned; while in the latter, the names of Baxter and Frost are omitted, and those of William Ostler and Thomas Martin appear. Of these, on their attaining to manhood, Underwood

* See note *ante*, p. 345.

and Ostler, the latter of whom was called, in Davies' *Scourge of Folly*, 'the king of actors,' were taken into the King's Company, and were acting with them in 1610; Nathaniel Field, who himself wrote several plays, and was associated with Massinger in the authorship of others, had joined them in 1618; and probably, since a similar confusion of name is by no means of rare occurrence in documents of that time, Robert Baxter was identical with the Richard Baxter, who was a member of the King's Company in 1631. Wright, in his *Historia Histrionica*, tells that the Children of the Chapel were 'famous for good action;' and we gather from one of Jonson's epigrams that Pavy was inimitable in his representation of an old man. Says rare Ben, in an 'epitaph on Salathiel Pavy, a child of Queen Elizabeth's Chapel,'

'Years he numbered scarce thirteen
When fates turn'd cruel,
Yet three fill'd Zodiacs had he been
The stage's jewel;
And did act, what now we moan,
Old Man so duly,
As, sooth, the Parcs thought him one,
He play'd so truly.
So by error to his fate
They all consented.'

Some idea of the quality of these juvenile players, and the measure of success with which, thanks to Ben Jonson's aid, they competed with the men's companies playing at the Globe and the Fortune, may be inferred from the terms in which they were alluded to by Shakespeare—'an eyrie of children, little eyases, that cry out on the top of question, and are most tyrannically clapp'd for't: these are now in fashion; and so be-rattle the common stages (so they call them) that many wearing rapiers are afraid of goose-quills, and dare scarce come thither.' And when, in reply to Hamlet's inquiry, Rosencrantz is made to

assert that the boys carry away 'Hercules and his load, too,' the great dramatist evidently meant that the children drew larger audiences than did the adult players at the Globe Theatre, which displayed for its sign a figure of Hercules supporting the Globe, and the legend *Totus mundus agit histrionem*. Webster, in his induction to Marston's *Malcontent*, which, after its revision, was appropriated and performed at the Globe by the King's Company, is alluding to the performances of this children's company at Blackfriars when he makes Sly say, 'I am one that hath seen this play often,' adding (in reply to Burbage's inquiry, 'Why do you conceal your feather, sir?'), 'Why, do you think I'll have jests broken upon me in the play, to be laughed at? This play hath beaten all our gallants out of the feathers: Blackfriars hath almost spoiled Blackfriars for feathers.'

Reference has already been made to the size of the playhouse in Blackfriars. Possibly it may be well to bestow a momentary glance at some of its other features before proceeding further with its history. It was usually spoken of as 'a private house;' but some uncertainty exists as to what constituted the fundamental difference between such houses and the public theatres, and caused them to be thus distinctively designated. In many respects, unquestionably, the dissimilarity was great. The private houses were covered in, whereas the public theatres were open to the sky; and while plays were presented at the former by candle-light, performances at the latter were invariably given in the daytime. Moreover, both plays and audiences at the private houses were of a very different character from

those seen elsewhere. The eloquent pastorals, comedies spiced with personal satire, and tragedies founded on classical history—most of them ‘caviare to the general’—produced at the private houses were as congenial to the taste of the *jeunesse dorée* and *dilettanti* who resorted thither, as were the buffoonery and spectacular display provided at the public theatres to the plebeian and uncritical sightseers who frequented them. With regard to the interior structure and economy of Blackfriars a brief notice will suffice. On three sides of the building were tiers of galleries, and beneath these, small ‘rooms’ or boxes: the price of admission to the former being sixpence, and to the latter, in Shakespeare’s time, a shilling; but the charge appears to have been subsequently raised to double that sum. The ‘gentry’ were accommodated with seats in the pit, the entrance-fee to this part of the house being the same as to the galleries. At the back of the stage was a permanent gallery, and in this scenes which were supposed to take place in the tower of a castle, at the window of an upper chamber, on a raised terrace, or on some similar eminence, were represented. In the front of this balcony were suspended curtains, which opened in the centre, and were drawn along an iron rod, as were also those which ‘covertly shrouded’ the stage, and prevented the ‘groundlings’ from peeping in. The stage itself was hung with tapestry, usually faded, often much decayed; and its floor, like those of churches and palaces in England at that time, was strewn with rushes. On the stage three-legged stools were provided for the ‘galants,’ who, we learn from the preface to the first folio edition of Shakespeare’s works, in which

these bloods are styled ‘magistrates of wit,’ were wont to sit there, at charges of sixpence and a shilling each, the prices varying according to the eligibility of situation. In attendance upon these Elizabethan beaux—‘the private stage’s audience, the twelve-penny-stoole gentlemen’—were pages, whose primary function was to replenish the foplings’ pipes with tobacco; smoking being permitted here and in other parts of the house, although ‘to take tobacco on the stage’ appears to have been accounted a custom more honoured in the breach than the observance. The ladies, according to Prynne’s *Histriomastix*, were occasionally ‘offered the tobacco-pipe’ at plays. A triple flourish of trumpets announced the opening of the representation; and between the acts the band—the instrumentalists at this house were considered the best musicians in London—discoursed what passed in those days as ‘most eloquent music.’ Before the performance commenced, and during the subsequent intervals, which else had been tedious and provocative of ennui, ale and wine, nuts and apples, were in great request; the audience finding diversion in the music, and in these methods of refreshment, alternated with card-playing and capricious criticisms. In *The Case is Altered* Ben Jonson has depicted, with a precision of detail almost daguerreotypic, the hare-brained chatter of such irresponsible critics on the occasion of a new play being produced, which then, as now, always attracted a larger audience. ‘But the sport is, at the new play, to observe the sway and variety of opinion that passeth it. A man shall have such a confused mixture of judgment poured out in the throng there as ridiculous as laughter itself. One says he likes

not the writing; another likes not the plot; another not the playing; and sometimes a fellow that comes not there past once in five years, at a parliament time or so, will be as deep-mired in censuring as the best, and swear, by God's foot, he would never stir his foot to see a hundred such as that is!

Such was Blackfriars, and such were its frequenters, when the Children of the Chapel were playing there during the latter years of the glorious reign of great Elizabeth. The Queen does not appear to have witnessed any of their performances at this house. Her only recorded visit to Blackfriars, however, was attended by an incident so characteristic of her petulant Highness that no apology will be needed for relating it here. Nor is it altogether irrelevant to the subject of this article. In 1660—the self-same year in which the wrinkled and capricious monarch was referred to in terms of the most fulsome adulation in his *Cynthia's Revels* by Ben Jonson, who, keen satirist of the Court though he was, well-nigh out-courtiered professed courtiers in flattering the Queen—Elizabeth, on the day of Lord Henry Herbert's marriage with an heiress of the house of Russell, paid a visit to the bridegroom, whose residence was within the precinct of Blackfriars. The Queen, having been met by the bride at the water-side, was borne thence in a litter by six knights to the house, where she dined; and subsequently proceeded to Lord Cobham's residence (also in Blackfriars), passing on her way thither through the house of Doctor Puddin, who improved the occasion by presenting her with a fan. At Lord Cobham's after supper, the 'divine Cynthia,' to whom a histrionic spectacle of some kind was only less gratifying and necessary than an *affaire*

du cœur, witnessed a masque performed by six ladies, representing different emotions, and sumptuously apparelled; one of whom besought the Queen to be her partner in the dance, a new and strange one, possibly devised for the nonce. Elizabeth—her woman's heart (ever young: besides, she herself was only sixty) sadly disquieted, we are told, with her love for Essex—after inquiring of the lady what character she personated, and being told it was Affection, exclaimed that Affection was false: yet, despite her disconsolate temper, her Majesty consented to join the dance.

After the accession of James I. in 1603, the Children of the Chapel—the company, however, may have been partially reconstituted—were known as the Children of the Queen's Revels. In January of the following year, Edward Kirkham, Alexander Hawkins, Thomas Kendall, and Robert Payne were appointed directors thereof; but a twelve-month had scarcely passed ere the management had undergone a change, and Samuel Daniel and Henry Evans were placed at its head. Between 1603 and 1607 the children represented several plays by Chapman, including his tragedy of *Alfonso*, and his comedies of *May Day*, *All Fools*, and *Monsieur d'Olive*, of which the two last-mentioned were considered excellent plays and met with considerable success; others by John Marston, among them *The Dutch Courtesan*—referred to in the Black Years, 1606, as 'corrupting English conditions'—*Parisitaster*, and *Wonder of Women*; and some by Middleton. They also produced *Eastward Ho!* a comedy containing reflections on the Scots, and references to 'thirty-pound knights,' by no means palatable to the Scottish occupant of the

English throne, who had displayed the *perfidium ingenium* proverbially characteristic of his race by creating seven hundred knights within the space of three months. The authors, Chapman, Ben Jonson, and Marston, were consigned to prison: indeed, it was hinted that the trinity of play-writers were likely to lose their ears and noses (*O tempora! O mores!*); but, it is said, on the intercession of Camden and Selden, they were pardoned and set at liberty. In 1607 the Children of the Queen's Revels were succeeded at Blackfriars by an entirely distinct company—the Children of the King's Revels—for whom Rowley wrote *A Match at Midnight* and other plays, one being *The Isle of Gulls*, the plot of which was taken from Sir Philip Sydney's *Arcadia*; Lodowick Barry, *Ram Alley*; Middleton, *A Trick to Catch the Old One*, *The Family of Love*, and *Your Five Gallants*; Armin, *Two Maids of More Clacke*; Machin, *The Dumb Knight*; and Sharp-ham, *The Fleire* and *Cupid's Whirligig*.

In December 1609 this 'eyrie of children' had quitted Blackfriars, and in their stead appeared upon its boards a right goodly fellowship, including Lowin, Armin, Condell, Heminge, Richard Burbage, and Shakespeare himself. Burbage, it appears, compensated the lessee for the unexpired portion of the lease that had been granted in 1596 by his (Burbage's) father. In the petition to the Lord Chamberlain, antecedently quoted from, Burbage's descendants stated that, 'The boyes dayly wearing out, it was considered that house would bee as fitt for ourselves, and soe purchased the lease remaining from Evans with our money, and placed men-players, which were Heminge, Condell, Shakespeare, &c.' The

great poet's adherence to, and personal continuance in, a profession held in even the slightest estimation by but few, and regarded with disdain by the immense majority of his countrymen, at this time—long after he had acquired, apart from his emoluments as a dramatist, a certain and handsome competence—furnish convincing proof alike of his thorough love for the actor's vocation, his belief in its essential nobility, and the realisation in his own mind of the power and possibilities, yet latent and undreamt of by others, with which the histrionic art, whose exponents as such merely existed on sufferance, was pregnant. As we have already seen, the monarch had no sympathy with the popular prejudice against the practice of the Thespian art:

'Sweet swan of Avon, what a sight it were
To see thee in our waters yet appear,
And make those flights upon the banks
of Thames
That so did take Eliza and our James!'

Thus Jonson witnessed to the pleasure the great Tudor queen, and the royal pedant by whom she was succeeded, derived from the surpassing talent of his immortal contemporary; and who that reads the scanty, almost infinitesimal, references to the acting of the greatest dramatist the world has ever seen, does not devoutly echo the language of rare Ben? In a manuscript list, dated 1660, of 'some of the most ancient plays that were acted at Blackfriars,' and in other documents, mention is made of nine of Shakespeare's own dramas as having been performed there, viz. *The Tempest*, *Love's Labour Lost*, *Twelfth Night*, *The Taming of the Shrew*, *Henry VIII.*, *Romeo and Juliet*, *Hamlet*, *King Lear*, and *Macbeth*. No record of the characters personated at Blackfriars by Shakespeare himself is

known to exist; but from a reference to him in Davies' *Scourge of Folly* (1611)—

'Some say, good Will, which I in sport
do sing,
Hadst thou not played some kingly
parts in sport,
Thou hadst been a companion for a king,
And been a king among the meaner
sort'—

we may infer that he played the part of a king in certain plays, either his own or some of those written by Tourneur, Fletcher, Beaumont, and others for the King's Company. A passage in the same author's *Humours of Heaven on Earth* (1609) appears, from a marginal note (W.S., R.B.), to also refer to Shakespeare. In this coupling of his name with that of Burbage, and the declaration that the twain had not been guerdoned by Fortune 'to their deserts,' we find a contemporary of the great poet corroborating, by anticipation, Aubrey's assertion that 'Shakespeare did act exceedingly well.'

The parts sustained by Burbage, 'England's great Roscius,' in some of the above-mentioned plays are enumerated in an elegy upon this famous actor. Among them were Romeo, Antonio, and the title-roles in *Hamlet*, *Macbeth*, and *King Lear*. From the same source we also derive some information as to his remarkable command of facial expression and the consummate versatility of his art:

'His stature small, but every thought and
mood
Might thoroughly from his face be understood;
And his whole action he could change
with ease
From ancient Lear to youthful Pericles.
But let me not forget one chiefest part,
Wherein, beyond the rest, he mov'd the
heart;
The grieved Moor.'

It is elsewhere related that his portrayal of Hamlet—at that time, as ever since, accepted as the leading character of the foremost

actor of the day—was a most admirable performance; his personation of this, the most difficult and exacting of Shakespearean creations, being a profoundly tragically true interpretation of the poet's marvellous conception. How intimately he was also identified in the popular mind with the leading part in *Richard III.* appears from an account of a visit to Bosworth Field, given in an itinerary by Bishop Corbet, in which the genial host of the Leicester inn, 'full of ale and history,' when telling the story of the encounter,

'Mistook a player for a king:
For when he would have said, "King
Richard dy'd,
And call'd *A horse, a horse!*" he "*Burbage*" cry'd.'

There is, however, no positive evidence that either this play or that of *Othello* was performed at Blackfriars—at any rate, in Burbage's time; although, since the King's Company played here throughout the winter months, removing to the Globe for the summer season, there is certainly strong presumption that such was the fact. In his *Historia Histrionica*, to which reference has already been made more than once, Wright gives much interesting information respecting plays and players in Blackfriars. He tells us that *Epicene*, or the *Silent Woman*, and other of Jonson's plays, were acted 'in perfection' here. From him we learn, too, that Lowin represented, 'with mighty applause,' Falstaff, Volpone, Morose in *Epicene*, and Mammon in *The Alchemist*. Armin is mentioned by Ben Jonson as one of the 'principal actors' in his *Alchemist*; but there is no further record of what plays, either of Shakespeare or of other writers, he appeared in. From a dialogue in the comedy of *Knavery in all Trades* (1664) it would

seem that Taylor and Pollard acted with Lowin in *Henry VIII.* at a very early date; Wright, moreover, says that Taylor was distinguished as Iago in *Othello*; but, without a doubt, these notices refer to the representations given some years after Shakespeare's death, when, by the bye, Swanton used to play *Othello*. Nor is it probable—notwithstanding a stage tradition, current in the days of the Merry Monarch, and referred to by Downes in his *Roscius Anglicanus*, that Taylor, whom Sir William Davenant had seen playing Hamlet at Blackfriars, was specially instructed in the rôle by the great dramatist himself—that he had undertaken this character before the demise of its author, even if he had, which also is unlikely, before the death of Burbage, its original and most famous representative. Taylor personated Truewit in *Epicæne* and Face in *The Alchemist*. We have no information with regard to the parts taken by Condell and Heminge in either of the Shakespearean dramas played here. Both of them acted in *The Alchemist*, and subsequently in many of the plays of Beaumont and Fletcher and other writers, produced, before the death of Burbage, by the King's Company at Blackfriars. But we somewhat anticipate.

In 1610 the company—consisting of John Garland, Thomas Hobbes, Robert Dawes, Joseph Taylor, John Newton, Gilbert Reason, and William Rowley, which, under the direction of the last-named, had been playing here three years previously under the style of the Children of the King's Revels, and was now known as the Duke of York's—was performing at Blackfriars at such times as this stage was not occupied by the King's Players. Some two years later, upon these boards,

appeared the Lady Elizabeth's Company, which, notwithstanding some changes in the *personnel*, was a continuation of that of the Queen's Revels of 1603. Field, already referred to as a Child of the Chapel, and subsequently a member of the King's, was at this time one of the Lady Elizabeth's players, and as such earned the proud distinction of being called by Ben Jonson the 'Burbage of his company.' Nor, it may be incidentally mentioned, is this the only instance in which we find the names of Burbage and Field thus associated; for in Flecknoe's *Short Discourse of the English Stage* they are likewise coupled in a manner to imply that these actors were of equal merit and repute. Eccleston, who had previously belonged to the King's (1610-1611), was a member of the Lady Elizabeth's Company at this date. He returned, however, in 1614, to the King's Players, whom Taylor, as we have lately seen, and Rowley subsequently joined—the latter probably in 1623, possibly at a somewhat earlier date. The death of Prince Henry in 1612, and the Princess Elizabeth's marriage with the Count Palatine in the ensuing February, affected in some measure several of the companies. The Duke of York having, by reason of his brother's death, become Prince of Wales, his actors were known as the Prince's. Several changes in the constitution of this company, under Taylor, and of the Lady Elizabeth's under Foster, ensued; both of them eventually being amalgamated with that of the Revels, under Rossiter. Taylor was appointed manager of the conjoined companies, whose members were called 'the Lady Elizabeth's Players,' and Field wrote for them several plays, which they performed at

Blackfriars. Among these was a comedy entitled *Amends for Ladies*, written by way of making amends to the fair sex for another of his plays, *A Woman's a Weathercock*, produced some years previously, and dedicated 'to any woman that hath been no weathercock'—a very ungracious and ungallant way, to say the least of it, of intimating that it was not dedicated to any one.

On St. Peter's Day, 1613, the Globe Theatre was destroyed by fire. Puritanism maintained that the catastrophe was providential, and a judgment upon plays and players; nay more, it alleged that Satan, *in propria persona*, had been seen to enter the building in a state of incandescence, thereby, of course, causing the conflagration. Such was the contention of phenomenal virtue; but common sense was ready with the more probable explanation that the thatched roof over the stage had caught fire during the performance of *Henry VIII.*, owing to the negligent manner in which, at the entry of the pseudo-king, a peal of ordnance had been discharged. This misfortune necessitated the occupancy, during the remaining summer months in that year, by the King's Players of their winter house in Blackfriars.

Between 1613 and 1625 Jonson, Fletcher, Beaumont, Webster, Middleton, Davenport, Massinger, and Rowley were the dramatists who wrote for the King's Company. *Thierry and Theodoret* appears to have been the first play furnished by Fletcher for the theatre in Blackfriars; and to this rapidly succeeded a great number from the same prolific pen. This author's plays—many wholly his own work, a smaller number the joint composition of Beaumont and himself, and a few produced by him in conjunction

with other playwrights—were, with very rare exceptions, specially written for the King's Players. Reference will be made here, however, only to such as are actually recorded as having been represented by them at their house in the 'Blackfryers'; although, in all probability, many, if not most, of the remaining ones were acted on these boards. In *The Maid's Tragedy*, originally performed here at an early date, Lowin personated Melantius, and Amintor was played by Stephen Hamerton, who was at first a 'most noted and beautiful woman-actor'—female performers were unknown previous to the Restoration—but afterwards assumed the character of a young lover, in which he proved equally successful. *The Scornful Lady*, which had already been played at Blackfriars by the Children of the Queen's Revels, was reproduced here by the King's Players, and proved immensely popular; as also did *A King and no King*, justly ranked among the *chefs-d'œuvre* of the highly-gifted *confères* whose names are indissolubly associated in our literary annals. Shank acted Sir Roger in the former play. *Philaster*, *The Wild Goose Chase*, and *The Custom of the Country* were received with enthusiastic applause. Evidence of the undiminished popularity of the two last-named comedies on their revival at a later period is afforded by memoranda of Sir Henry Herbert, the Master of the Revels, respecting the two annual benefits, which, during five and a half years, were granted to him by the King's Company, 'to be taken out of the second daye of a revived playe, att his owne choyce.' In his office-book these entries occur:

'The benefit of the winter's day, being the second day of an old

play called *The Custome of the Cuntrye* came to 17l. 10s. 0d., this 22 of Nov. 1628. From the King's Company at the Blackfryers.'

'Ye 6 November 1631—Received for the winter day upon *The Wild Goose Chase*, the same day, 15l. 0s. 0d.'

These sums were larger than those derived from any of the other plays Sir Henry selected for his benefits. In *The Custome of the Cuntrye*, Taylor, Lowin, Toolie, Benfield, Egglestone, Underwood, Sharpe, and Holcomb were the principal actors; the first five of these, with Pollard, also played the leading parts in *The Spanish Curate*, which was licensed by Sir Henry in October 1622, and met with a very favourable reception at Blackfriars. In *The Wild Goose Chase*, Benfield played De Gard; Robinson, La Castre; Taylor, Mirabel; Pollard, Pinac; Lowin, Belleur; Penn, Nantolet; Swanston, Lugier; Hammerton, Oriana; Trigg and Gough represented the airy daughters of Nantolet, while Shank personated their servant. *The Widow*, in which Fletcher had for collaborateurs Ben Jonson and Middleton, was also received with acclamation at this house. In Webster's *Duchess of Malfi* Burbage originally played the rôle of Ferdinand, in which he was succeeded by Taylor; Condell that of Cardinal, taken by Robinson in later representations; and Ostler that of Antonio Bologna, subsequently assumed by Benfield. Lowin personated De Bosola; Rice, the Marquis of Pescara; and Pallant sustained no less than three characters, to wit, the Doctor, Cariola, and a Court Officer, Sharpe taking the title-rôle. Among Middleton's plays produced at Blackfriars by the King's Company were *The Mayor of Queenborough*, *The Witch*, and

Anything for a Quiet Life; and of Massinger's, during this period, *The Wandering Lovers*, *The Fatal Dowry*, and *The Duke of Milan*; the last-named tragedy meeting with an extremely good reception. Two episodes, during the earlier years of the occupancy of Blackfriars by the King's players, may be mentioned. It had been customary for the Master of the Revels to grant to the players, on the payment of a certain fee, Lenten dispensations, which enabled them to act on all week-days save Tuesdays and Fridays, these being sermon-days. In March 1616, however, an order, issued by the Lord Chamberlain and communicated by the Master of the Revels to the players, expressly prohibited all performances during Lent. In consequence of their having disregarded this order, Heminge and Burbage, with representatives of other companies, were commanded by the Privy Council to appear and answer for their disobedience; but, since there is no record of either their appearance or punishment, it is likely that they escaped the consequences of their contumacy by making due submission to the Master of the Revels. The other incident affords evidence of the crowded houses which witnessed the performances in Blackfriars. The civic authorities, who had been successful some four years previously in preventing the erection by Rosciter of a new theatre within the liberty, in an order dated January 21st, 1619 (modern notation), decreed the suppression of the old one. In this document it is averred that 'there is daily so great a resort of people' to the playhouse in Blackfriars, 'and so great multitude of coaches, whereof many are hackney-coaches, bringing people of all sorte, that sometimes all the streets cannot con-

tain them.' Of course this fresh exercise of authority by the Mayor and Corporation was of none effect; the theatre, as we have already seen, had been built within the precinct, because that lay outside the jurisdiction of the City king, whose chagrin at the inefficacy of his decree, moreover, was in no wise diminished by the action of the sovereign in granting, some fourteen months subsequently, a patent under the Great Seal, which authorised his 'well-beloved servants to act, not only at the Globe on the Bankside, but at their private house, situated in the precincts of Blackfriars.'

In the spring of 1625 the British Solomon breathed his last, and 'Baby Charles' was left to essay, with 'Steeny's' help, the government of an increasingly discontented people. Within a decade, Death had been busy among the ranks of those whose story mingles with the record of the players. In 1616 both Shakespeare and Beaumont passed away; in 1619 Burbage had quitted this mundane stage; and in less than six months after the death of King James, Fletcher had likewise gone over to the great majority. The princely virtuoso and virtuous prince, on whom now devolved the sovereignty of these realms, was a right royal patron of the players. Although 'to be like the Court,' so Donne tells us, 'was a player's praise'—and Charles is generally supposed to have, by his own example, imparted a higher tone to the morals of the nobility—it must be acknowledged that the gross licentiousness and ribaldry which characterised the dramas produced in the times of Elizabeth and James still deformed the works of the playwrights who catered for the theatres during the reign of this ill-fated King. Between 1625

and 1642 Jonson, Mayne, Ford, Massinger, Shirley, Carlell, Davenant, Broome, Glapthorne, Suckling, Heywood, and Wilson wrote for the King's Company. Several of Fletcher's plays, other than those already mentioned, were produced at Blackfriars after the author's death. Among these were *The Fair Maid of the Sun*, *The Noble Gentleman*, *The Woman's Prize*, *Monsieur Thomas*, *The Faithful Shepherdess*, and *The Elder Brother*; also *Two Noble Kinsmen*, in the composition of which tradition saith that Shakespeare had a hand. In Sir Henry Herbert's office-book are divers memoranda dated 1633, concerning *The Woman's Prize*, which is spoken of therein as 'anould play.' From these we learn that, on the 19th of October in that year, Sir Henry sent an order to 'Mr. Taylor, Mr. Lowins, or any of the King's players at the Blackfryers,' prohibiting the representation of this play on that afternoon, in consequence of 'complaints of foule and offensive matters conteyned therein.' The injunction was obeyed, *The Scornful Lady* being acted instead of the obnoxious comedy, the ms. of which was returned to the players on the following Monday morning, 'purged of oaths, prophaness, and ribaldrye.' That the same actors were not always so ready to conform with a good grace to the behests of the Master of the Revels is evident from another entry in the same book: 'Ye 24 Octob. 1633. Lowins and Swanston were sorry for their ill manners, and craved my pardon, which I gave them in presence of Mr. Taylor and Mr. Benfelde.'

Broome, who was originally servant to Ben Jonson, wrote for the company at Blackfriars *The Northern Lass*, which elicited a generous compliment from his

former master; *Novella*, an exceedingly gross play; and *The Queen's Exchange*, a comedy, which gained considerable applause. Of Sir William Davenant's plays, *The Cruel Brother*, *The Just Italian*, *The Platonic Lovers*, *The Wits*, *Love and Honour*, and *The Unfortunate Lovers*, were performed at this house. Massinger contributed a large number of the dramas put upon this stage during the period under consideration. *The Roman Actor*, *The Picture*, *The Emperor of the East*, *The City Madam*, *The Guardian*, *Cleander*, *A Very Woman*, and *The Bashful Lover* were played here, all of them enjoying great popularity, which, in the case of, at least, the last named, was of long continuance. Taylor, who took the part of Paris in *The Roman Actor*, called that play 'the best of many good.' Two of Ford's pieces, *The Lover's Melancholy* and *The Broken Heart*, were acted at Blackfriars; and Carlell furnished a like number to the *répertoire* of the company for production on these boards—namely, *Arvirago* and *Philicia* and *The Passionate Lover*. John Shank, the King's player; Jasper Mayne, a country vicar and Court preacher; and William Habington, said to have been an accomplished gentleman 'of amiable piety,' each wrote a play deemed worthy of representation at Blackfriars. The actor's production was called *Shank's Ordinary*; *The City Match* was the title of the parson's play; and *The Queen of Aragon* that of the amiable pious gentleman's tragi-comedy. By the way, whatever may have been the case with regard to Habington's piety, his amiability could hardly be gainsaid; since, in the days of James, he had been condemned to die for harbouring Popish priests, while he is men-

tioned during the Puritan rebellion as 'running with the times, and not unknown to Oliver Cromwell.' Several of Shirley's plays, to wit, *The Brothers*, *The Doubtful Heir*, *The Imposture*, *The Cardinal*, and *The Sisters*, were performed here: we learn, too, from the title-page of that tragi-comedy that *The Court Secret*, though never acted, was 'prepared for the scene at the Blackfriars.' Wright, who tells us in *Historia Histrionica* that Hart and Clun were, as boys, 'bred up' at this theatre, imparts the additional information that the former was Robinson's boy, and acted the Duchess in Shirley's tragedy of *The Cardinal*. Jonson's *Magnetic Lady* (his comedy *The New Inn* had been played and damned here in 1629) and Heywood's *Challenge for Beauty* were represented at this house; as were also Sir John Denham's tragedy, *The Sophy*, and two comedies, *The Country Captain* and *The Variety*, written by that munificent patron of Ben Jonson, Shirley, and many another of their talented contemporaries, the loyal and gallant Duke of Newcastle, of whom, by the bye, Wood tells that he was greatly assisted by Shirley in the composition of these plays. Three out of the four dramas written by Sir John Suckling—viz. *Aglaura*, *The Goblins*, and *Brennoralt*—were put on the stage at Blackfriars. The former is said to have been the first play acted in this kingdom with scenes, which had previously been confined to masques, and, indeed, were not, excepting in isolated instances, such as this, adopted by theatrical *entrepreneurs* till after the Restoration; the playwrights and actors, according to Wright, entirely relying upon the merit of the play and 'goodness of the action' as passports to

popular favour and support. It was during this period that Sir George Buck likewise bore testimony to the successful representation of 'dramatic poesy' upon the stage, declaring that, 'in respect of the action and art, and not of the cost and sumptuousness,' the performances of our English actors were unsurpassed even by those of Rome 'in the Auge of her pomp and glory.' *Aglaura* was produced with a 'pomp and circumstance' novel to the frequenters of the theatre in Blackfriars. 'The splendour of the *mise en scène* is hinted at by a contemporary letter-writer, who says that 'the play cost three or four hundred pounds setting out; eight or ten suits of new clothes he (Suckling) gave the players, an unheard-of prodigality.' The author, who, by reason of his skill in satire, as well as of his loyalty and talent, was peculiarly odious to the Puritans, in returning from the performance, was stabbed with a rapier, which, however, fortunately failed to penetrate the doublet he was wearing. It is almost certain that the King and Queen honoured the first representation by their presence. These right royal lovers—all loyal lovers are royal, but wedded ones are doubly so—both displayed a special fondness for the drama, and were, moreover, by no means rare visitors to the house in Blackfriars. Among the various records of this fact, we read that the Queen witnessed Massinger's *Cleander* played upon these boards; and in a list of plays acted before the King and his loving consort in 1636 is 'the 5th of May, at the Blackfryers, for the Queene and the Prince Elector—*Alfonso*.'

Assuredly, Charles stood in need of diversion amid the perplexities and distractions of affairs

of State. Carleton's advice to the Commons, 'Move not his Majesty with trenching upon his prerogatives, lest you bring him out of love with Parliaments,' had fallen on deaf ears. An uncompromising legislature had curtailed the royal prerogatives with a vengeance; and the equally unaccommodating monarch had long been sadly 'out of love' with a parliamentary régime. Puritanism, which, in a much earlier time, had loomed shadowy, indistinct, and no bigger than a man's hand on the political horizon, had, during the long series of intervening years, gradually been attaining larger proportions and assuming shape. Now it stood forth revealed, a full-grown giant, no longer unconscious of its strength, its presentiment silhouetted in terribly distinct outline, and with portentous blackness upon the foreground of the national life. Its votaries, too, now had sterner business in hand than unavailing remonstrances against the 'mischievous exercise' of 'poets, pipers, plaiers, and such like caterpillers of a commonwealth.' To certain of these protests, however, we would briefly advert. During the present reign two petitions, one in 1631 and the other two years later, of similar import to that of 1619, had been presented to Laud, who at that time was Bishop of London. But as yet this house, so often 'doomed to death,' was 'fated not to die.' The Puritans, a large number of whom resided within the precinct, failed to obtain the suppression of the theatre, for which their petition craved; and the more zealous among them perforce solaced themselves by nourishing their resentment in hope, if not assurance, of a coming time wherein they would be able to gratify it. But that meaner

spirits were not lacking among the elect, and that these were well content to spoil the Philistines in a less heroic fashion, appears from Randolph's *Looking Glass*, in which occurs a dialogue between two Paritans, who hawked their wares within the precinct, plying for custom among the visitors to the playhouse.

Apropos of petitions, it may here be mentioned that, in 1635, three members of the King's Company, Benfield, Swanston, and Pollard, applied to the Lord Chamberlain, the Earl of Pembroke, for an order to compel Burbage's representatives and Shank to transfer to them certain shares in the Globe and Blackfriars Theatres. The petitioners, after referring to the inadequacy of their own remuneration as compared with the amount received by those of their fellow-actors who were shareholders, point out the injustice to themselves involved in the circumstances of Burbage's relatives, who inherited his shares, not being actors; and of Shank's acquisition, by private purchase from Heminge, of an undue number of such shares, a portion of which, they contend, should have been offered to themselves. From this document we ascertain that Shank had two, and Cuthbert Burbage, Robinson, Taylor, Lowin, Condell, and Underwood each held one part or share of the theatre in Blackfriars at this date. Counter-petitions were presented by Shank and by the Burbages (that of the latter has been previously alluded to); but the Lord Chamberlain granted the petitioners' prayer, and subsequently, in consequence of a further memorial from Shank, directed the Master of the Revels and others to determine what sum should be paid to that actor for the shares he was ordered to convey to his three colleagues.

At length there came a time of crisis in the troublesome affairs of State. King and Parliament resolved to submit their quarrel to the arbitrament of the sword; and the fair fields of this our England—no longer merry England, as she had been of old—were disfigured and distained, with all the horrible concomitants of an internecine and intestine strife. The theatres, it need not be said, were closed. But 'his Majesty's servants' remained 'his Majesty's servants' still. One renegade, indeed, was found among the company—Swanston, who declared himself a Presbyterian, and sided with the Roundheads. *A chaque saint sa chandelle*—we may not expend a rushlight upon this recreant's shrine. Lowin, Taylor, and Pollard were superannuated; the others, as became good men and true, adhered to their royal master, discarding sock and buskin to don the gear and symbols of the sterner service of grim-visaged war. Mohun was appointed to a captaincy in the royal forces, while Hart, Burt (who had originally been Shank's boy at the playhouse in Blackfriars), and Shatterell were nominated respectively lieutenant, cornet, and quartermaster in Sir Thomas Dallison's troop of Rupert's famous horse. These were fortunate or unfortunate enough—which, 'tis hard to say—to survive many a stoutly-contested fight and arduous campaign; not so, however, Robinson, to whom the fanatic Harrison, afterwards deservedly hanged at Charing Cross, refused quarter, despatching the famous comedian after he had laid down his arms, and impudently excusing his treacherous action with the assertion that 'Cursed is he who doth the work of the Lord negligently.'

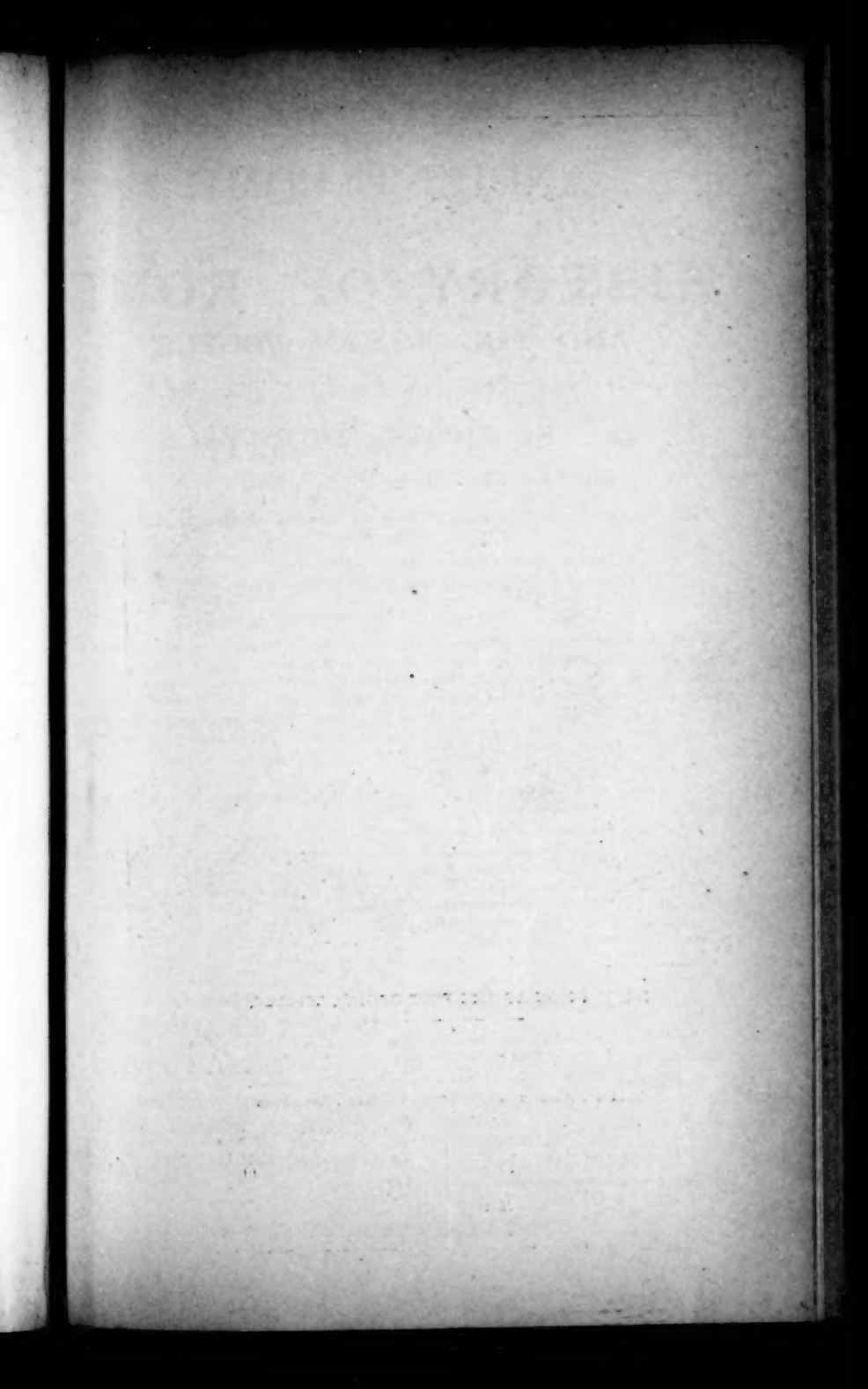
When the loyalist cause was

wholly lost, and the wars were over, the survivors of the King's Company returned to London. But the supremacy of the saints spelt ruin to the players. In a commonwealth, of which Praise God Barebones was destined to become a distinguished ornament, there was as little room for the professors of the Thespian art as there had been in Plato's republic for poets and reviewers. Two ordinances of the Long Parliament, dated October 22nd, 1647, and February 11th, 1648, absolutely forbade any performances of stage-plays and interludes; decreed the demolition of all stages, seats, and galleries; and the punishment as rogues and vagabonds of all players styling themselves the King's or Queen's servants, discovered in the exercise of their vocation; and, moreover, prescribed the infliction of a five-shilling fine on every spectator, and the confiscation and application to parochial purposes of the actors' receipts. Before the troubles the King's players, who, Wright says, were men of grave and sober behaviour, had lived in repute, and severally amassed a fair competence. All that remained to many of them after the wars were their shares in the playhouses; and on the promulgation of these parliamentary enactments they were mostly reduced to a necessitous condition. By occasional surreptitious performances at Holland House and elsewhere, and the publication of plays not previously printed, they did their best to provide themselves with the necessities of life, hoping apparently against hope for the restoration of the royal house and of their own fallen fortunes. Fallen, indeed! Lowin, who had attained to no little eminence in his profession in the

days of Elizabeth, was now installed as mine host of the Three Pigeons at Brentford. Here, wearing, perhaps, garments made out of his ancient livery—the scarlet cloth cloak and crimson velvet cape, which the monarch had been wont to present biennially to his players—the veteran of the King's Company was, by dispensing creature comforts, still catering for the requirements of the public, albeit in so infinitely less dignified a fashion than before. *Sic transit gloria histrionis!*

Stay, it is not quite so. The ascendancy of 'the saints' was of short duration: Puritanism, so recently in perihelion, was even now approaching its aphelion. In less than a decade its embodiment had 'fallen into the sere, the yellow leaf;' ere long it was defunct; and whatever of its spirit survived seemed likely to be gradually assimilated to the healthful tolerance which characterises genuine English feeling and opinion. The effluence of centuries has toned down and eliminated many of the asperities and prejudices which were once prevalent in our popular life and thought; and the 'whirligig of time' has brought in a sweet revenge for the players. The high estimation in which histrionic art and artists are now held furnishes a significant commentary on the policy which, in those bad old times, persisted in regarding the members of the craft as 'rogues and vagabonds.' In these palmy days of the Victorian era, England again is merry England; and English life—fairer, freer, and fuller than it ever was before—is all the merrier for the amenities of the players.

J. F. ROLPH.





DR. JOHNSON AT THE FEET OF MRS. THRALE.

[Poor Walter Thornbury had some charming things in his *Two Centuries of Song*. One of these we reproduce—the playful verses addressed to Mrs. Thrale on the completion of her thirty-fifth year. In those days grave lexicographers could throw off a pleasant *jeu d'esprit* when inspired by the charms of beauty and intellect.]

TO MRS. THRALE ON HER COMPLETING HER THIRTY-FIFTH YEAR.

An Impromptu.

Of in danger, yet alive,
We are come to thirty-five;
Long may better years arrive,
Better years than thirty-five!
Could philosophers contrive
Life to stop at thirty-five,
Time his hours should never drive
O'er the bounds of thirty-five.
High to soar and deep to dive
Nature gives at thirty-five.

Ladies, stock and tend your hive,
Trifle not at thirty-five;
For howe'er we boast and
 strive,
Life declines at thirty-five.
He that ever hopes to thrive
Must begin by thirty-five;
And all who wisely wish to
 wive
Must look on Thrale at thirty-five.